

PC ZONE

£4.99 August 1997 ISSUE 53

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PC GAMES!



ATOMIC
BOMBERMAN
FIRST
REVIEW!

Inside this issue

- TOMB RAIDER 2 **WORLD EXCLUSIVE!**
- DUNGEON KEEPER **DEFINITIVE REVIEW!**
- STARCRAFT **BLIZZARD REVEAL ALL!**
- SIMCITY 3000 **FIRST LOOK!**

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ROMERO'S QUAKE KILLER...

DAIKATANA!



**WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
PREVIEW!**

IF YOUR CDs ARE MISSING PLEASE CONSULT YOUR NEWSAGENT

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO
KNOW ABOUT **DIABLO!** See Page 124





HE MEDIEVAL

CATHEDRAL OFTEN

SERVED AS A CENTRE

OF LEARNING



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ATOMIC BOMBERMAN

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At last a decent tennis game for the PC. Surprise hit of the month, this one.

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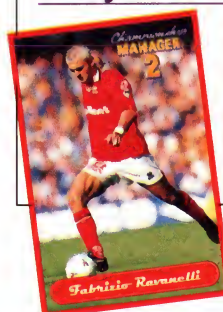
More top-notch pinball fun from Empire.

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Complex yet strangely engrossing strategy action from the guys at GT.

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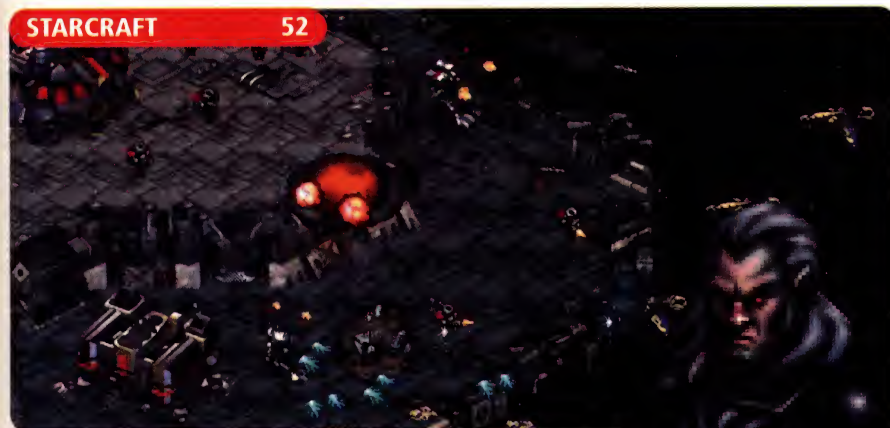


Mirror on the wall, which is the best footie management sim of them all?, is the question we posed Patrick McCarthy.



Daikatana

This is already one of the most talked-about games on the Internet and is set to make Ion Storm a major player on the games scene before they've even released any product!! Macca takes the lid off John Romero's forthcoming epic.



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CD ZONE



Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry - phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP

Phone **Matthew on 01274 736990**
Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone **ABT on 01708 250250**
Any week day between 11am and 6pm
(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either helpline, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

**CD Exchange (50), PC Zone,
Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St,
London W1P 7HJ**

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

.....Post code:

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.
CDs from previous issues are also available.

On the disc

Once again this month we've got TWO CDs packed full of playable demos, patches and utilities for your perusal. Each CD requires different installation routines, so be sure to follow the instructions carefully. To access the software on this month's CD Zone from Windows 95, pop the CD in the drawer and double-click on the CD icon

on your desktop. Simply double-click on the BROWSER.EXE file and this will launch the CD browser program, which will enable you to select and install this month's demos. If you're running your machine under DOS, change to your CD-ROM drive (the default command is usually <D:>). Type <PCZONE.EXE> to launch the browser.

Click here to access the DOS demos on this month's CD

DOS Demos
Our round up the month's latest DOS games.

Click here to view the cartoons and the Our Price chart

Windows
All the latest Windows and Windows 95 demos, Internet essentials and the top utilities that no PC should be without.

Click here to access the plethora of Windows demos on offer this month

Regulars
Cartoons, competitions and more...

Click here to see how some of the hottest new games are shaping up

Hotshots
Take a look at some games still in development.

Click here to go back to the C:\ prompt and quit the CD

Installation shortcuts

If for some reason the front end to the CD won't run properly, you can still install each demo by bypassing the front end altogether.

For the Windows demos, select FILE, RUN from PROGRAM MANAGER or START, RUN from Windows 95, type your CD drive letter (usually D:) and then type the Installation line exactly as below.

For the DOS demos, select your CD drive (usually by typing D:) and type the installation line exactly as below.

For example, to run Acclaim's *Bust A Move 2* demo, just type the following:
Type D: (where your CD is D) <ENTER>
Type \DOSDEMOS\BAM2DEMO\GO_SMALL.EXE

Manual installation commands

Demo	Directory/installation line
Dogs Of War	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\DOGS\SETUP.EXE
F-16	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\F16\SETUP.EXE
F/A 18 Hornet v3.0	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\F18\SETUP.EXE
FIFA Soccer Manager	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\FIFA\INSTALL2.EXE
Jack Niklaus 4	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\UN4DEMO\SETUP.EXE
Monkey Island 3	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\MONKEY3\CURSE.EXE
Need For Speed II	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\NFS2\NFS2DEMO.EXE
Outpost II	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\OUTPOST2\SETUP.EXE
Wipeout 2097	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\WIPEOUT2\SETUP.EXE
History Of The World	\WINDEMOS\GAMEDEMO\HOTW\HOTW.EXE
Culky's Lifetips	\WINDEMOS\MISC\LIFETIPS\LIFETIPS.EXE
Lands Of Lore II	\WINDEMOS\MISC\LORE\LOL.EXE
Trash It!	\DOSDEMOS\TRASHIT\GO_SMALL.EXE
Bust A Move 2	\DOSDEMOS\BAM2DEMO\GO_SMALL.EXE
Extreme Assault	\DOSDEMOS\EXTREME\GO_SMALL.EXE
X-Men	\DOSDEMOS\XMEN\INSTALL.EXE



MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You'll need at least a Pentium 75 with 8Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM. Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95, and as a result, some of them may require 16Mb RAM to run satisfactorily.

Where appropriate, we've included the minimum specifications as a guide to each individual game demo.

TRASH IT! GT INTERACTIVE (DOS)

SEEKING A BIG GOOEY HELPING OF GENUINELY INSANE ARCADE ACTION? THEN RELAX, DEAR READER, for your quest is at an end. Welcome to the demented world of *Trash It!*, the mallet-orientated puzzle 'em up from Rage Software's Brum division. The action takes place in 'Timmy World', in which hammers run around like little people and stuff. Don't ask why. You play a bloke named Jack Hammer (yah hah haa) – your task is to ring the bell on every level. To do this you'll need to smash the bejesus out of more or less everything on screen, with your sodding great hammer. Don't be afraid to experiment, but *do* try not to get squashed.



CONTROLS:

Gamepad/joystick/keyboard

NB If you have a gamepad plugged in, the game will auto-detect it and you won't be able to use the keys to control player 1.

KEYS

Player No.	1	2	3	4
Up	[E]	[U]	[↑]	KPad [6]
Down	[S]	[H]	[↓]	KPad [3]
Right	[Z]	[B]	[→]	KPad [4]
Left	[X]	[V]	[←]	KPad [0]
Fire 1	[D]	[J]	[SHIFT]	[ENTER]
Fire 2	[R]	[I]	[RETURN]	KPad [5]

GENERAL MOVES:

- Pull Down to descend ladders or hide in your hat (handy when the ceiling caves in).
- Jump or swing hammer with Fire 2. You can't hold a hammer and jump at the same time.
- Fire 1 to get yer mallet out. Push Up and Fire 1 to produce a vacuum cleaner (for sucking up the little live hammers with).
- Hold a direction if you wish to swing the hammer from the sides.
- If you lose your hammer, stand underneath the barber's pole and press Up.
- Pick up objects with Fire 2. Cannon balls can be thrown into cannons. They'll fire automatically if you get it right.



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THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

LUCASARTS (WIN 95 ONLY)

ASIDE FROM *DISCWORLD 2* AND *Broken Sword*, we've been somewhat starved of decent point-and-click adventures of late. It's been nothing but 3D action this and 3D action that. Well, it's time for the legion of *Quake* wannabes to shut up, stop squabbling and sit down, because *Monkey Island 3* is here, in all its two-dimensional glory. And it *kicks*. Don't worry if you've never even *smelt* the original games, since no previous knowledge is necessary to get through this classic-in-the-making, although we *do* recommend that you seek them out anyway – they're available in a must-buy double pack as part of Virgin's White Label budget range.

It's no old-school point-and-clicker either. For starters, the interface is basically invisible. More on that later, but right now – check out those graphics. Those aren't cut-scenes. Those are shots from the game itself. Ooh, it's just like being inside a *cartoon*, isn't it?

Here's the deal: you play the part of Guybrush Threepwood (crazy name, crazy guy). He's a bumbling idiot, the sort of backward jerk who drools when someone mentions the word 'pie' after a log-dropping session in the communal toilet... you'll feel

right at home. In this demo, Guybrush has been incarcerated on board a pirate ship by the evil, improbably bearded and altogether ghostly LeChuck, his long time arch-rival. Boo, hiss, etc.

Anyway, your task is to get Guybrush the hell out of there, using only your mouse, your hand, and your massive intellect. Good luck.



CONTROLS:

The Curse Of Monkey Island's interface is so simple, a *genuine* monkey could use it – with its big pink monkey bottom. Basically, the on-screen crosshair turns *white* when placed over an area you can walk to, and *red* when daintily floating o'er an object you can use. To interact with items or people, move the cursor over them, then click and hold down the left mouse button. The 'Verb Coin' will then appear, which is less confusing than it sounds. Select the 'eyes' to look at an object, the 'hand' to manipulate it, or the 'parrot's mouth' to start chin-wagging (and also to bite, taste or blow). Look, it'll all make sense when you play the thing, honestly. Oh yeah, and if you right-click, you'll bring up the inventory (note that you can also use the 'Verb Coin' on inventory objects too). Er, got that?



OTHER USEFUL NUGGETS OF INFORMATION

Can't work out how the hell to quit? Hit Alt-X and you'll be whisked back to Windows 95 in the blink of an eye: just like slowly awakening following a particularly vivid and surreal dream.

Hard of hearing or don't have a sound card? Hey, no problem. Just tap Alt-T and the comic dialogue will be accompanied by comparatively austere on-screen text.

If you're so impatient you don't even care what's going on, you can always hit Escape to end whatever cut-scene you're currently experiencing – or the full stop [.] key to make a character hurry up and get to the end of the sentence they're mouthing. But really, you should take a look in the mirror and ask yourself why your attention span is so shockingly limited. You'll never get anywhere with an attitude like that. Imbecile. Want a fight about it? Come on then.

NEED FOR SPEED 2

ELECTRONIC ARTS (WINDOWS 95)

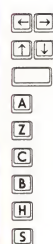


HILARIOUS DRUGS REFERENCES ASIDE, this nifty drive 'em up from Electronic Arts represents every boy racer's dream – without any of the nasty coagulated blood-on-the-wipers grisliness that makes *Carnageddon* such a moralist's nightmare. It's the sheer thrill of tearing up the road that makes this such a winner – try it out for yourself if you don't believe us. The object of the game couldn't be simpler: just drive like a bat out of hell. Or Droitwich, if you prefer. Just as long as you go *really* fast.

The demo lets you thrash the crap out of one car and one car only – the Ford GT90 to be precise. To get your grubby palms on the other, sleeker wheelie-bins, you'll need to visit a shop and buy the full release. As per goddamn usual.

CONTROLS:

You can use a joystick if you like. The makers recommend the Gravis Gamepad Pro, but we reckon the Microsoft Sidewinder is just as good. Best of all, buy one of those flash steering wheel things.



Uh... wiggle it left a bit/Yeah, right there... oh!
Faster faster!/Ooh, not so quick, love...
Use your hand (brake)
Increase overall rhythm
Decrease overall rhythm
Place camera in saucy position
What it all looks like from behind
Get the horn
Have sexual intercourse. With a lady

THE NEED FOR CHEESE

To get the most out of *Need For Speed 2*, we recommend playing a selection of power-pop, soft-rock 'motoring hits'. You know the sort of thing – perpetually on sale in Esso garages for £4.99. Here are our personal faves:

SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE (Rainbow)

Air-punching, angst-ridden, absenteeism epic. One of the quintessential crappy car-driving hits.

HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO (Bonnie Tyler)

He's got to be big and he's got to be strong and

he's got to be faster than light? Oh, not asking for *much*, are you Bonnie? Stupid big-haired bitch.

IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC (Queen)

Utter, utter rubbish, replete with nonsensical lyrics and bum-bum-poo guitar solo by Brian 'Sodding' May.

ANGERZONE (Kenny Loggins)

As heard on the masterful *Top Gun* soundtrack. "Gonna take ya raaaah into the *dangerzone*", as the lyric would have it. On the plus side, it's excellent shagging music, assuming both partners share a warped sense of humour.

I WANNA KNOW WHAT LOVE IS (Foreigner)

We *think* it's Foreigner, but it could be REO Speedwagon, Journey, Styx, Kansas, or any one of those American AOR rock toss merchant bands. They used to churn this sort of stuff out by the *yard* in the mid-'80s, you know.

ABRACADABRA (Steve Miller Band)

Superb lyrics: "Abra, abracadabra," it went, "I wanna reach out and grab ya." They don't make 'em like that any more. Not since that EC directive went through.

KAYLEIGH (Marillion)

Thank God for nuclear warfare, eh?

F-16 DIGITAL INTEGRATION (WINDOWS 95)



DIGITAL INTEGRATION have pulled it off once again, as you'll see when you first clap your ocular spheroids on *F-16*, their ultra-realistic and altogether *edible* flight/air combat sim 'em up. Being a demo, not all the features are available to you, dear reader, but there's more than enough here to help you decide whether you like it or not. We reckon you will. As you can see, there are plenty of keypresses to remember, so we won't jaw on about the game itself. Just plug your joystick in, consult this list, and off you go...

CONTROLS:

Joystick/mouse/gamepad/keyboard

PRIMARY FLIGHT CONTROLS:

Gear up/down	[G]
Rudder left	[Z] or [O]/[INS]
Rudder right	[X] or [.] / [DEL]
Air brake	[B]
Select next waypoint	[N]
Select prev. waypoint	[SHIFT] + [N]
Stick forward	[W] or [8] / [↑]
Stick left	[A] or [4] / [←]
Stick back	[Z] or [2] / [↓]
Stick right	[S] or [6] / [→]
Throttle down	[=]
Slam shut	[SHIFT] + [=]
Throttle up	[+]
Slam open	[SHIFT] + [+]
Engine startup (first time pressed)	[SHIFT] + [=]
Engine shutdown (only when 60% Idle)	[ALT] + [=]

COCKPIT CONTROLS:

Wheel brakes on/off	[W]
---------------------	-----

ECM on/off	[E]
Transmit recon. data	[T]
Manual dispense flares	[F]
Manual dispense chaff	[C]
Fire extinguisher	[SHIFT] + [F]
Jettison fuel tanks	[J]
Jettison all	[ALT] + [J]
Combat mode	[K]
Instrument lights	[L]
Night vision on/off	[V]
Master warning light off	[M]

MFD CONTROLS:

Radar on/off	[R]
HUD contrast adjust	[I]
Cycle left MFD	[I]
Reverse cycle	[SHIFT] + [I]
Cycle right MFD	[J]
Reverse cycle	[SHIFT] + [J]
Change MFD "current" controls	[A]
Radar mode display mode toggle	[D]
Ground radar freeze	[H]
Radar air/ground toggle	[Y]

WEAPONS CONTROLS:

Fire weapon	[]
Next target	[BACKSPACE]
Previous target	[SHIFT] + [BACKSPACE]
Arm and select weapon	[ENTER]
Unarm weapon	[CTRL] + [ENTER]
Decrease salvo size	[SHIFT] + [ENTER]
Increase salvo size	[A] + [ENTER]
Weapon toggle	[Y]
Laser designate toggle	[ALT] + []

EXTERNAL VIEW CONTROLS:

F-16 tracking view	[F6]
Weapon view	[F7]
Weapon target view	[F8]
Target lock view	[F9]
Remote view	[F10]
Spectator view	[F11]
Zoom in	[+]
Zoom out	[=]

MISCELLANEOUS CONTROLS:

Quit mission	[CTRL] + [Q]
Re-centre joystick	[CTRL] + [Y]
Pause/resume	[P]



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WIPEOUT 2097

PSYGNOSIS (WINDOWS 95)



YOU WOULDN'T WANT ONE OF THEM UP YOUR ARSE, WOULD YOU?

See those anti-gravity ships? You wouldn't want one of them up your arse now, would you? No. Thought not. Here's a list of some *other* things you might not want to find up your arse of a summer's evening...

- The Albert Memorial
- A tube train
- A broom handle
- Your own forearm
- Someone else's arse
- An entire horse
- An entire house
- Inspector Morse
- Inspector Morse, on a horse, inside a house
- Some goats

CONTROLS:

You're best off using a lovely joypad with *Wipeout 2097*, but if you're a bit backward, you can use the bloody keyboard...

← → ↑ ↓	Steer/nose up and down
S	Accelerate
A	Air brake left
D	Air brake right
[]	Fire
ALT	Drop weapon

Function keys

F1	View: external/internal
F2	Mouse sensitivity: eight settings
F3	Draw distance: eight settings
F4	Engine trails: three settings
F5	Sky: on/off
F7	Bi-linear filtering: on/off

WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE FUTURE. AND WHAT'S ALL THIS? Hi-tech anti-gravity racing tournaments are all the rage?

Yeah, right. *Wipeout 2097* represents your chance to take part in just such an event. You'll be bundled into the driving seat of a high-velocity spacecraft thing and expected to drive like billy-o through a selection of sickeningly twisty courses (although there's only one such track in this demo). Fly over the blue arrows to increase your speed and over the multi-coloured spiky-shaped things to collect weapons and power-ups. Easy.

Those of you with 3D accelerator cards can start rubbing your hands together with distasteful glee, because *Wipeout 2097* has been designed specifically with you in mind. Those of you without special cards can still have a go at the demo, but it won't be half as good, OK?

F/A-18 HORNET

EMPIRE (WINDOWS 95)



WILD BLUE YONDER TIME, INNIT? WELCOME TO THE ZANY avionic world of *F/A-18 Hornet*. If you like your flight sims high-definition, crisp and smoothly animated, you can start drooling now. Y'see, this *Hornet* originally appeared on the humble Macintosh, a computer not ideally suited for processor-snapping texture maps and the like (see boxout). Still, some (present author included) prefer the relatively spartan nature of the graphics, since they allow for a far higher frame rate. So n'yaaah.

This demo limits you to one training mission (in Hawaii), and the documentation, multi-player support and saveable movie replay features are not present. Get the full version if you like what you see here. We'll be reviewing the final version soon – so keep 'em peeled.

CONTROLS:

Look, we're sorry and everything, but there really is *not* room to list all the keyboard commands for *F/A-18 Hornet* here. We'd need to order a truckload of ink and cut down 10,000 trees in order to do it. Instead, we'll list the basics. If you want to know all about the rest, simply find the file named F3DOCS.RTF after installation, open it in Word (or equivalent), and print the blasted thing out yourself. There's also a handy step-by-step tutorial in there as well, so flight sim virgins should have a whale of a time.

BASIC CONTROLS:

Use the joystick to steer the bloody plane.

4	Aileron left
6	Aileron right
8	Elevator down
5	Elevator up
[]	Rudder left
/	Rudder centre
[]	Rudder right
[]	Increase thrust
[]	Decrease thrust
BACKSPACE	Afterburner
DELETE	Speed brake/wheel brakes
[]	Gear
G	Flaps (snigger)
F	Eject
SHIFT E	Damage display
SHIFT D	Engine display
E	Auto-pilot
A	



STUPID PLAYTHINGS

Macs, eh? Bloody, bloody Macintosh com-bloody-puters. They're rubbish. For starters, they've only got *one* sodding mouse button. Useless. And they're always going "ping!" and "boing!" and stuff. They're bloody kids' computers, that's what they are. Great big overpriced Fisher Price Activity Centres. For people with goatee beards and polo necks. Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish.

CD ZONE EXTRA

HELLO SAILOR, LISTEN HERE SWEETHEART. AS ALWAYS, WE'VE INCLUDED some extra stuff on this month's CD. Check out the interactive preview demo of *Lands Of Lore II* featuring a behind-the-scenes look at the construction of the game. There's also a large helping of unmissable Culky-related hilarity (he'll advise you on all essential aspects of modern living, from banana-painting to wallclock-comprehension). It's all accessible from the browser – just point and click to your heart's content.

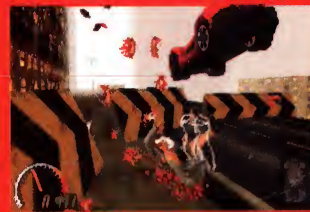


UNOFFICIAL CARMAGEDDON GORE PATCH (DOS)



PSST. C'MERE. SHH. KEEP IT QUIET. RIGHT, every month we surf the Net looking for the latest in game patches and upgrades (which we then shove onto our *Hot Wired* CD). It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it. Anyway, this month we happened upon something rather, well, *interesting*. It seems some nameless hacker has taken it upon himself to write an unofficial 'patch' for the commercial release of the game. What does it do? Hmm. Well, we couldn't possibly comment.

Bear in mind that this isn't an official patch – so use it at your own risk. If you're man enough.



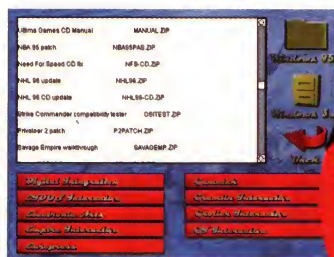
TRASH IT



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HOTWIRE your games with the PC ZONE essential selection



NO, YOU'RE NOT HALLUCINATING. ONCE AGAIN THERE ARE TWO entirely separate CDs nailed to the front of this month's super zoaraway zlam-bang Zone. Superb news, as we're sure you'll agree. But before you start punching the air and yelling 'woo- yeah!' like some god-awful American teenager in a mid-'80s rites of passage movie, shut up, sit down, and listen while we let you know exactly what's on the damn thing. Okay?

Now we're not trying to deliberately confuse you or anything, but we reckon this second CD is rather like two CDs in one – which means that in a way you've got three CDs this month (except in real terms, obviously). You see, the glimmering, shimmering disc contains two truly wonderful things: our regularly updated *Hot Wire* patch collection, and a special collection of magnificent demos selected from MicroProse's top-notch PowerPlus budget range. Rarely has so much value been concentrated within the confines of a single polyurethane circle.

HOT WIRED

Hey kids! Look! It's an exhaustive collection of patches and upgrades! Hoo! Ray! What's that you say? What's a patch? Like, duuuuhhhh...

A patch is a nugget of code which updates a given piece of software – in this case, games software. Developers release patches for a number of reasons, usually to fix minor bugs but occasionally to add entirely new features to a commercially available product. You can find them on the Internet or receive them from the publishers themselves, but both those methods require unreasonable amounts of patience – hence our handy *Hot Wire* patch parade. We've been scouring the Internet for all the patches we can find, and we've collected them here in an easy-to-use database.



HOW TO GET HOT WIRED

Simply run the file WIRED.EXE from the CD to start the browser software and you're in business. The patches are arranged according to publisher, so if you were after a bug fix for *First Encounters*, for instance, you'd simply look under 'G' for 'Gametek'. Couldn't be simpler (unless you forget

that, say, Bullfrog are *developers*, whereas Electronic Arts are *publishers*, and so you don't look under 'E' for that *Hi Octane* upgrade... hello? Are you still there?).

It's pie-simple for Windows 95 users, whereas Windows 3.1 peasants will need to extract the files themselves via File Manager. Serves you right, you backward fools. Still, we've made it a little bit easier for you by listing the path to every patch in the browser itself. If you get stuck, just ring our reader helpline on 01708 250250 – any weekday between 9am and 4pm.

MICROPROSE POWERPLUS SELECTION

Blimey! Is this CD a bottomless pit of wonderment and joy or what? Last month we brought you a collection of Virgin White Label try-outs, this month we're hoying a man-size sack full of MicroProse PowerPlus demos your way. There's loads of 'em to choose from, including the early X:Com games, the original *Grand Prix 1*, *Top Gun* and the Sid Meier classic, *Colonization*. A quality selection, we think you'll agree, and check this out – most of them will run quite happily on a 486 DX2-66.



THE HOT WIRED POWERPLUS DEMOS

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
Civilization	Renowned conquest 'em up from Sid Meier	Rolling demo
Formula 1 Grand Prix 1	Seminal F1 racing sim from Geoff Crammond	Playable
F15 III	High-speed air combat fighter	Rolling demo
Railroad Tycoon	DIY Railtrack resource management fun	Playable
UFO: Enemy Unknown	X:Com – the early years	Playable
Transport Tycoon	If it's got wheels or wings, it's in here	Playable
1942: Pacific Air War	WWII air combat action in the sun	Rolling demo
1944: Across The Rhine	WWII air combat action in the fog	Rolling demo
Colonization	Travel the world and make it your own	Rolling demo
Virtual Karts	Learn to become an F1 driver before you play <i>F1GP</i>	Playable demo
Grand Prix Manager	Manage your very own F1 racing team	Playable demo
X:Com TFTD	Terror from the deep in this watery alien strat 'em up	Playable demo
This Means War	Top real-time strategy action from this C&C clone	Playable demo
Top Gun	Action-packed air combat fun, based loosely on the film	Rolling demo
Star Trek: A Final Unity	If you like <i>Star Trek</i> , you'll just love this top adventure	Playable demo



OUTPOST 2

SIERRA (WINDOWS 95)

TURNED-BASED RESOURCE management and wargaming in space? Yes please, sir! Open wide for *Outpost 2*, the sequel to Sierra's celebrated sci-fi think 'em up. It's got a story and everything, you know. And here it is, in super 'Cut and Paste-o-Vision'...

It seems that in the early part of the 21st century government funding of NASA had been all but eliminated. What was left of the space program had fallen into the hands of a few multi-national business conglomerates. Then an enormous asteroid blah blah... collision course with Earth. Blah blah... build a colonisation starship, assembled in Earth orbit and fuelled from the atmosphere of Jupiter. Yawn. Asteroid blah blah... struck the Earth's surface. Blah blah... last human beings in the universe blah blah... set course for a binary star system dozens of light years from Earth... blah blah... one habitable planet, similar in many respects to Mars... blah blah... mankind's new home... settlement called "Eden"... blah blah... some of the colonists left Eden and founded a rival colony, Plymouth... Relations between Eden and Plymouth blah blah rocky... blah... two colonies have drifted apart... blah blah...

There you go, then. Use the mouse to control it all. If you're confused, consult the superb on-line help manual, included in this demo. It tells you absolutely everything you need to know, and it doesn't include random insults in every sentence like we do, arseface.

Hang on a second... Plymouth????!!!!??



CONTROLS:

Mouse

Specs:

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

STUCK ON A GAME?

THEN RING OUR TIPS LINE AND PUT AN END TO YOUR FRUSTRATION!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS RING the special *PC Zone* tips hotline on 0171 917 7698 on Wednesdays between 2pm and 6pm, and you'll be put through to our tips expert who has a massive database of hints and walkthroughs of just about every game we've covered in *PC Zone*.

Because it's a real human on the end of the line and not a machine, you'll need to say the correct password to get through. Then, simply tell us the game you're stuck on and we'll do our best to help you out.

If you don't get through the first time, please be patient as some queries can take up to a few minutes to deal with. Do not ring any other number, as we cannot put you through from any other phone.

NB Please note that this line is for games tips only, and that we cannot help out with technical queries, problems with the cover CDs, or any other queries on this line.

This month's password is: **Hello, my name is Quentin. Can you help me?**



Tips line pic: PHIL WARD

TRASH IT



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BULLETIN

What's new! What it looks like! When it's out!

Bullfrog spawns again

Games honchos are leaving Bullfrog quicker than financiers are leaving Hong Kong. The latest new company to be

DATAPAD



Lara's back!*

*(And her front too...)

Phwoorrr! Look at the size of those... GUNS! Lara Croft, the girl that 'pushes back', returns for more adventuring hi-jinks.

The sexiest computer character since Ms PacMan is set to return in the eagerly-awaited *Tomb Raider 2*. Core Design have finally killed all the rumours and officially announced that the sequel is in the works.

Not wanting to stray from the successful formula of the first game, Core are treating *TR2* as more of the same, only better.

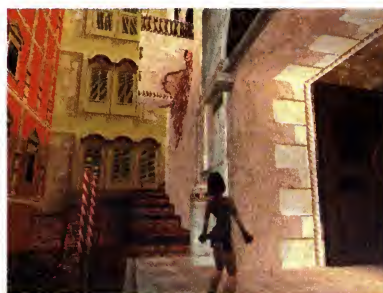
"We're not trying to do a brand new game because that's not what people would want," explains Gavin Rummery, *TR2*'s lead designer. "At the moment we're just trying to do a sequel, including all of the things we wanted to put in the original game but didn't have time to."

These include some much-enhanced graphics – the in-game Lara will now have a much curvier look about her, with more rounded breasts and a beautifully swishy ponytail. She's more agile too, responding to your commands with pixel-perfect accuracy and with a few new

moves, too. Core have also confided that she'll undergo several changes of costume throughout the game, including a figure-hugging wetsuit with underwater harpoon... (Calm it! – Ed.)

The storyline takes Lara around the world once more, including trips to Venice and Mayan temples (although our pleas to include a level where she raises finance for her expedition by working as a lap-dancer in a Vegas nightclub have gone unrealised).

Finally, Core have also said that they're planning "something special" for the sequel's



training level, although they're remaining very tight-lipped about precisely what that will be.

The sequel comes about as EIDOS have changed the 'real-life' Lara Croft. Gone is Natalie Cook (who has featured heavily in *PC Zone*'s pages over the last few months) and in

comes a newer model, who apparently is even closer to the real thing than ever (if you know what we mean lads).

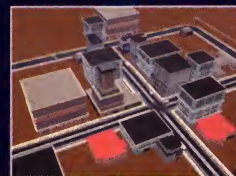
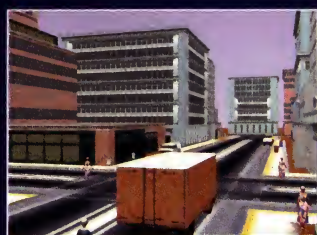
Tomb Raider 2 is currently penned in for a November release, but we'll bring you more details a lot sooner than that. In the meantime, you can check EIDOS' Website at www.eidosinteractive.com. **Z**



Who'd mess with Lara Croft? Please form an orderly queue...

Conurbation nation

One of the most eagerly-awaited games of the past year has finally been revealed to the world's press. *SimCity 3000* is the latest in Maxis' astonishingly successful range of city simulator games – games that have been responsible for more lost sleep than the steamiest late-night episodes of *Baywatch*.



Feast your eyes on 3D buildings galore – in *SimCity 3000* from Maxis.

For the first time, *SimCity 3000* will let the player go into the kind of detail that would make most town planners run screaming. The new game will feature the ability to view your cities from any level you desire – be it miles in the air or at street level in gloriously detailed 3D. You'll be able to see your little *Sim* people going about their daily lives: shopping at malls, working in offices and holding up liquor stores – to raise enough money to pay for your inevitably massive tax increases.

We'll bring you a detailed look soon, but for now more information can be gleaned from Maxis' Website at www.maxis.com. **Z**

formed is Mucky Foot Productions. Mucky Foot will comprise Mike Diskett, ex-project leader and lead programmer on *Syndicate Wars*; Fin McGeachie, the lead artist on *Magic Carpet*; and Guy

Simmons, who was the project leader and lead programmer on *Creation* – the underwater game recently abandoned as a non-starter by EA in America, as exclusively revealed by our man with

the ill-fitting fedora in issue 50. Their first project, *Dark City*, will be something of a departure from their usual games, taking the form of an arcade-orientated effort with evolutionary character Al.



Battle Isle 4 confirmed

Following much speculation, Blue Byte have revealed that there *will* be a fourth chapter in their popular *Battle Isle* series. Going under the name *Incubation*, this latest instalment will revolve around a group of terran colonists inhabiting the peaceful planet of Scarya. After a technical error, a human virus has spread beyond the colony's protective energy shield and affected the indigenous creatures known as the Scay'Ger, mutating them into aggressive monsters. It's down to you to guide a platoon of space marines and attempt to evacuate the colony. Turn-based with loads of animations, it's pencilled in for the end of the year. **Z**



The graphics in *Battle Isle 3* were good, but these?! Like, wow man!



Superiority of the skies



Microsoft improve and expand their highly successful *Flight Simulator* range with an update for '98.



The best-selling flight simulator program of all time is to be given a complete overhaul. *Flight Sim 98* will be the first game in the series to have full support for 3D accelerator cards, including 3Cfx, which is rapidly becoming the market leader in this area. This should alleviate the problems with slowdown running at

full detail, which have plagued recent versions of the product.

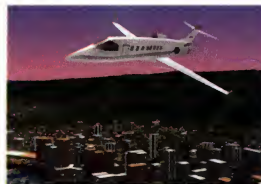
Microsoft are promising ten times more airports for the new game and new planes, including the Learjet 45. Some of the planes from previous versions of the game have been updated too, with planes like the Cesna 182 RG making an appearance for the first time. Helicopters, such as the Bell 206, will

be muscling their way in, and the now almost obligatory multi-player support will be catered for with an eight-player network option. *Flight Sim 98* is due to arrive on shelves across the country in September.

For more info have a look at <http://www.microsoft.com/games>. **Z**



Microsoft are back with a new version of *Flight Simulator*.



Swan Swan Hummingbird



Civilization guru Sid Meier is close to finishing his long-awaited American Civil War game, a subject that he's been interested in for some time.

Sid Meier's Gettysburg! will be his first completely new game since the critically acclaimed *Civ*, and is based around the butchery and maiming that took place in the largely dishonourable Battle Of Gettysburg. Sid says: "It was pretty scary thinking about designing something to follow *Civilization*. But I've always tried to write games that I really want to play, so I decided to work on something that has fascinated me ever since I was a kid."

Take a look at <http://www.firaxis.com> if you're hungry for more. **Z**



Quake II by Activision

As predicted by industry insiders (as in 'inside various important people's colons'), Activision have signed worldwide rights to *Quake II*. This completes their royal flush of *Quake*-powered 3D shooters which started with both official id mission packs, then *Hexen II*, and *Sin*, the new title from *Scourge Of Armagon* designers, Hipnotic.

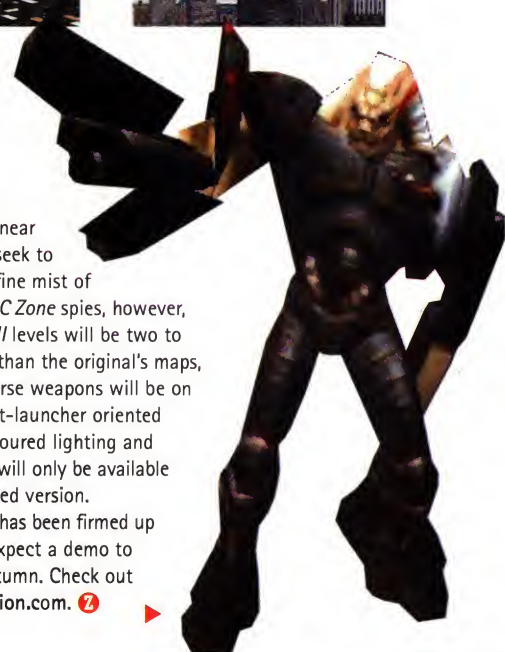
Few new details about the game were forthcoming, bar a reiteration that *Quake II*

is a complete redesign with nothing carried over from the original game except for the *Quake* Unified Engine (a new version which integrates 3D accelerator support, Windows 95/NT and Internet gameplay all in one bite-sized EXE). So total is the redesign, in fact, that the name '*Quake*' may even be dropped.

According to the rather flowery press blurb: "Gamers encounter an entirely new breed of intelligent and aggressive enemies

which inhabit a complex matrix of interrelated, non-linear worlds, as players seek to avoid becoming a fine mist of blood and bone." *PC Zone* spies, however, report that *Quake II* levels will be two to three times bigger than the original's maps, and that more diverse weapons will be on hand for less rocket-launcher oriented gameplay. Also, coloured lighting and real-time shadows will only be available in the 3D accelerated version.

The release date has been firmed up for Christmas, so expect a demo to materialise this autumn. Check out <http://www.activision.com>. **Z**



JetFighter III flies further

JetFighter pilots who are fed up of bombing the hell out of Castro can finally get to fly their plane further afield with the *Enhanced*

Campaign CD. With over 70 new missions in China, Korea, Japan, Russia and Alaska, the CD also gives you the chance to try taking to the skies in an F-14 Tomcat, loaded with all new weapons.

Once again the maps are as detailed as possible and the graphics have been given a boost thanks to an injection of all-new technology. The *Enhanced Campaign* CD should be available as of this month.



DATA PAD

The power of Golgotha



Crack.com are currently working on a new action combat game which could be (admittedly lazily) described as a sort of cross between *C&C* and *Quake*, but promises to be much more than that. The dramatically titled *Golgotha* isn't due for some time yet and a release date



and publisher have yet to be announced. Nevertheless though, we've seen bits of the game and can reveal the following... Set in a battle-scarred city in the year 2084, *Golgotha* will involve much shelling and destruction as players rush around in their advanced 'supertank' in an attempt to

take over the base of their opponent. Crack.com say their game is loosely based on an ancient Apple game called *Rescue Raiders* – a simple capture-the-flag-style arcade game released way back in 1984. Id's famous *Quake* engine has been licensed to handle all the visuals, with 'advanced texture density support', which Crack.com say will bring an end to the 'fat' pixel and herald the dawn of a new graphics age. Or something.

We'll be looking at *Golgotha* in more detail at some point in the near future, but until then you'll just have to be patient and make do with <http://www.crack.com>.



First Sin shots!

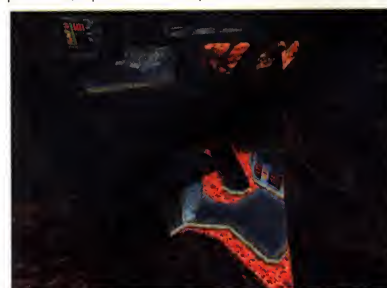


The first ever shots of Hipnotic's forthcoming 3D shoot 'em up, *Sin*, came into the office just as we were swallowing trans in an effort to prepare ourselves to go to press. And so here they are – for you, our dear readers, to look at, *using your eyes*.

As reported in the last issue, *Sin* will plonk the player right in the midst of a decaying future city ready to engage in a bloody fight against crime. Crawling with both criminals and mutant foes, *Sin* is to feature six different game environments, a huge amount of graphical detail and a rich, engaging storyline – one quality that is sadly absent from many games of this genre.

"Players are transported to a highly detailed interactive world where solid gameplay, lightning-fast reflexes and an engaging multi-dimensional story combine to provide the first complete 3D action game experience," proclaimed Hipnotic head honcho Harry Miller, "So be prepared to have a fist of reality shoved down your throat."

Fisting is due to commence in February of next year, courtesy of Activision, but we'll be punching deep into *Sin* for a full preview in the very near future. Until then, for more information check out <http://www.hipnotic.com>.



Fox Interactive in release binge

Quiet since the debacle that was *Independence Day*, Fox Interactive break the silence with an announcement about three big new games.

Fox Interactive have a number of big games on the way, among which *Croc*, a Mario 64-style 3D platform game, is probably the biggest. Developers Argonaut Software, who created the 3D shoot 'em up *StarFox* for the SNES (and its upcoming N64 version), have spent two years just on the game design tools and 3D engine, with another year on top of that to work on the game itself. *Croc*'s a loveable crocodile (in case you thought it was about Paul Gascoigne) whose range of movements are distinctly Marioesque: he can do all that jumping, swimming and climbing stuff, but he can also snowboard (all together: "Cooo-ell"), hold

his breath underwater for hours, or rip people's legs off with a single bite. Well, maybe not the last one. Currently in the final stages of development, it has more than 60 environments to run about and die in and will be released on the PC in time for Christmas.

The ex-Jaguar, ex-PlayStation first-person viewed shoot 'em up, *Alien Versus Predator*, is coming to the PC in a Win95 stylee. It's set on a biological research station, and you get to play as a Space Marine, a Predator or an Alien. Which means they got the title wrong, but we'll let it go. There'll be network play with Deathmatch equivalents and wussy co-operative options. Weapons include flame throwers, demolition charges, missile launchers and grenades. And hiding in people's tummies and surprising them at dinner.

Virtual Springfield will let you wander around a navigable version of the town the Simpsons call 'home' and the house the Simpsons call er, home too. It will feature original animation, 36 activity screens and interactive locations that will give you unprecedented insights into the inner workings of Everyone's Favourite Dysfunctional Family.



Be Homer Simpson for a day (burp) in *Virtual Springfield* from Fox.



Although this looks a little like an SNES game, we can confirm it is PC *Croc*.

FREE WITH EVERY GAME OF POD...



...OPPONENTS FROM ALL ROUND THE WORLD

POD is the fastest, meanest racing game ever. And it's the only game that lets you play opponents worldwide - in split screen, link, over the Net, LAN or modem in any combination. It's also the first to harness the full

potential of MMX™, 3DFX and Pentium. POD comes with 16 tracks and 8 cars and from May 1, you can download 2 new tracks and a new car free via the Net. Try the shareware and catch the bug!

"A classy, impressive arcade blast" 4/5 Stars CGW

"One of the best arcade racers on the PC" 90%




Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

pod

<http://www.ubisoft.co.uk>

3DO go to Heaven

Yet another entry into the deluge of first-person action games on their way by the end of the year is *Requiem: Wrath Of The*

Fallen from The 3DO Company. Dealing with fallen angels, a revolution in Heaven and a battle across the world, *Requiem* combines action with role-playing as you have a large number of

friendly NPCs to deal with as well. Also noteworthy is the third-person camera that appears whenever the player performs certain functions. More news as we get it.



DATA PAD

Challenge Annelid

Everyone's favourite annelid is back. Earthworm Jim (voted World's Most Popular Games Character Without Any Body Hair Or A Spine by readers of *Shaven Contortionists Monthly*), has spawned a sequel – presumably by having sex with himself. And, like every other happening platform game, he's gone all three-dimensional.

Earthworm Jim 3D, as the game will controversially be known, features Voxel Space technology (as already shown off to good effect in games such as *Comanche 3* and *Armored Fist*), and jumping about and that. It all takes place inside his own head, too – very solipsistic (look it up, lunkhead). Get ready to wander those vast echoing caverns around January next year.

In the meantime, more wormfood can be gotten at <http://www.interplay.com>. **Z**

An outbreak at Telstar

Telstar Electronic Studios want to put a virus on your PC. No, seriously. But rather than a hateful piece of software put together by dysfunctional dullards, *Virus* is in fact a game. It accurately simulates the corruption of your actual hard drive, hence each game is different depending on the machine running it.

More of a cartoon adventure than a harrowing insight into the vagaries of senility, *Dementia* revolves around the exploits of Granny, a toothless crone whose recipe book has been stolen by a rabbit. The quest to retrieve it takes her all over various fantasy worlds where she encounters a host of mind-bending puzzles.

Joe Blow may sound like the name of a brothel, but it isn't. It's a 3D platform game. The titular character is a resident

of Dreamworld, where the children are haunted by ghoulish nightmares so macabre as to make them scared to sleep.

All three games are on the cards for an autumn release. **Z**



(Top) *Demented Dementia*. (Above right) *Joe Blow* me! (Right) *Virus* won't knock your PC.



Herculean effort from Disney



With no marks for originality, but potentially lots for style, Disney Interactive's game-of-the-film platform game, *Hercules*, is currently shaping up for an autumn release – possibly to coincide with the opening of the movie in October.



UK development house Eurocom (who have previously created *Donald In Cold Shadow* for Disney and are also working on the forthcoming *Machine Hunter* for EIDOS) are handling all the coding, and have been working closely with the animators and producers of the movie in an attempt to

faithfully recreate the feel of the big screen experience.

Despite the fact that Disney have produced yet another platform game, *Hercules* looks set to wow younger gamers with its intriguing mixture of 2D and 3D action, its beautifully drawn and animated graphics, and its foot-tappingly 'bouncy' soundtrack.

James Woods, Danny DeVito and Tate Donovan, all of whom working on the movie, have recorded extra voice-overs for the game and there are also a number of previously unseen characters and animations that never made it into the final film, so it could potentially become a collector's item at some point in the dark and distant future. **Z**



(Top) *Hercules*' amazing final hydra battle. (Above) Paint along with Disney.

More troops for Empire

Fans of *Empire's Flying Corps* will be pleased to learn that not only will they be able to get their hands on an update patch sometime over the next few months, but also that *Flying Corps Gold* is currently set for release at the end of September.

The patch will fix the game's bugs, and as a further bonus it will also provide users with a totally new 3Dfx engine, allow support for other 3D cards, improve the frame rate of the existing graphics and allow for commutative head-to-head games.

Flying Corps Gold will be an all-new version of the game which will include more aircraft to fly, network, Internet and Wireplay support, a mission editor, full 3D card support and a host of new graphical effects, such as cockpit wobbling, aircraft shadows and full light-shading. **Z**



Vastly enhanced graphics in *Empire's* new 'Gold' edition of *Flying Corps*.

Jack Nicklaus® 4



subject to the TOUGHEST
standards in GOLF.....JACK'S



ACCOLADE

What We Rally, Rally Want

Network Q RAC Rally is one of the best laughs to be had behind the wheel of your PC, but it's not without its little faults. So you'll be no doubt

be delighted to learn that Europress are currently working on a sequel called *International Rally Championship*. They're promising enhanced car controls, including a handbrake for those crucial hill starts; three more cars; a greater range of



DATA PAD

Sierra show their strength

Sierra see 1997 as one of the most important years in the company's history, with several key titles set for release by the end of the year. We went to Sierra's HQ in Bellevue, Washington, to find out what all the fuss is about.



Cyberstorm 2 features real-time combat and infinitely customisable robot bods.



Sierra's reputation for releasing tons of adventure games every year and precious little else is now about to change with the imminent arrival of *Half Life*, a 3D first-person shooter which uses the *Quake* engine to great effect. Aside from the usual running around shooting the hell out of everything in sight gameplay (which is now standard for this type of game), *Half Life* is blessed with an extremely impressive artificial intelligence system that gives the monsters in the game a definite edge over would-be monster slayers.

Valve, the development team responsible for *Half Life*, believe that gamers are no longer happy with the simple walk-around-shoot-everything gameplay inherent in games beginning with 'Q'.

For this reason you will discover that the enemies in *Half Life* will react very intelligently when they see you coming by diving into safe-spots, hiding behind pillars, and even guessing where you are about to move to next, based on where you were when they last saw you. This will obviously make for a very strategic game and indeed, Valve are quick

to point out that if you insist on taking the usual gung-ho approach that's customary in games such as *Quake* and *Duke 3D*, you won't last long in *Half Life*. The 3Dfx version of the game we saw looked absolutely gob-smacking and Sierra are confident that the game will be a monster hit when it's finally released at the end of this year.

Obviously encouraged by the huge sales of the first instalment in the *Cyberstorm* saga, Sierra have wasted no time in getting the sequel underway. Unlike the first game in the series,



Cyberstorm 2: CorpWars features real-time combat as opposed to turn-based action. The developers are hoping the new game will have the immediate appeal of games like *Command & Conquer* as well as very strong strategic elements for players expecting a more cerebral challenge.

Extensive multi-player options have been included, with up to eight players being able to team up over a network, modem or via the Internet. Do-it-yourself warlords will no doubt be pleased to hear that the game is infinitely customisable and that all Bioderms can be kitted out with a dazzling choice of weapons, armour and lots of other stuff besides. If everything goes according to plan, *Cyberstorm 2* should be on the shelves of your nearest games store in September. Until then, you can expect an in-depth preview of this game in the next issue of *PC Zone*.



(Above) *Half Life*: Shoot these headcrabs fast or they'll be nesting on your bonce before you know it. (Left) All creatures (human and non-human) pick fights with each other and generally behave as though you don't exist, unless you upset them, of course.

X-Fighters is set to be the first flight sim to give you the opportunity to design your own World War II attack plane and then let you loose in the war to see how long you last. Many of the planes in the game never actually saw action in the war, despite the fact that they were superior to the planes in service at the time, but you can change all that by putting together your own dream machine and giving Johnny Foreigner what for. *X-Fighters* is scheduled for release in November this year.

For information on any of these games, give Sierra a ring on 0118 920 9100 or check out the products on-line at <http://www.sierra.com>. 2



Build your own World War II planes in *X-Fighters* and show Johnny Foreigner what you're really made of.

set-up options; a new Simulation setting and even a split-screen mode. Tracks will be wider, with better roadside obstacles and more things to crash into (potholes; tree stumps; pensioners walking dogs etc). And you'll be

even be able to make your own up with the new track editor: joyriding around your local shops action ahoj. They have also decided to use the same 3D engine to produce *International Touring Car*

Championship, "the BBC's most popular live motor racing event" (ie the only live motor racing event they can afford). This promises to be an absolute corker, with 16 tracks around the world to ram Alain Menu off on.



Spear of destiny

BMG Interactive are dipping their toes into the pool of simulation with the forthcoming *Spearhead*, a tank game developed by Zombie. Attempting to straddle the murky area between intense simulation and playable action, they are looking to concentrate more on realistic graphics and sound than on a bank of unwieldy controls. To this end, actual noises have been recorded from the 70-ton M1A2 Abrams as its gigantic turbine engine kicks in. The terrain is based on satellite images of Tunisia and battles can be fought at different times of the day, with light and conditions affecting strategy. *Spearhead* is due this winter. **Z**



Codemaster rally round

Admit it – you're a Touring Car nut. You've got every conceivable bit of official merchandise. You've even got a poster of the fat bloke from *Top Gear* on your wall. But so far all your hopes and prayers for an official game have gone unrealised, so give your thanks to Codemasters who have just announced *TOCA Touring Car Championship*, a realistic simulation of the sport. The game includes courses that are accurate to 80 millimetres, cars laser-scanned to a microscopic hair of a millimetre, and driver AI that can cope with all the jostling and shunting. So will Codemasters steal the rally crown from *Network Q RAC Rally*? We'll just have to wait and see... **Z**



Arse over tit in Codie's *TOCA Racing*. Looks just a bit like NASCAR dunnit?

You read it here first

Yet more interesting guff as these pages hurtle towards the printers... LucasArts have leaked details of a new *Star Wars*-themed beat 'em up due on the PlayStation later in the year. *Star Wars: Masters Of Teras Kasi* (Teras Kasi being a form of martial arts that depends upon the focus of the

force for its power) will see players slugging it out with a number of well-known *Star Wars* characters (including Chewbacca, naturally), but it is not yet known whether PC owners will get the opportunity to lay down their sabre and put up their dukes. We'll keep you informed on that one...

And yet more *Star Wars* game-foolery – this time from Hasbro, who are producing a PC version of *Star Wars Monopoly*. The game will be shown for the first time at the forthcoming Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta, so look out for more details next month.

7th Level, the company responsible for *Complete Waste Of Time* and *The Holy Grail*, have another Monty Python game in the pipeline, this time based on Python's comedy epic *The Meaning Of Life*. It will utilise a full 3D graphics engine and is slated for a Chrimbo release. **Z**

HOT Line

Tracking the hottest games and their current release dates

Hexen 2 (Activision)

Actua Soccer 2 (Gremlin)

Flight Sim 98 (Microsoft)

Jedi Knight (LucasArts)

Monkey Island 3 (LucasArts)

Populous 3 (EA)

SimCity 3000 (Maxis)

Starcraft (Sierra)

Unreal (GT Interactive)

Duke Nukem Forever (GT Interactive)

Earthsiege 3 (Sierra)

Quake 2 (id)

Rally 4 (Europress)

Tomb Raider 2 (Core Design)

Daikatana (EIDOS Interactive)

The Dark Project (EIDOS Interactive)

Falcon 4.0 (Publisher TBA)

Star Trek: First Contact (MicroProse)

FIGP3 (MicroProse)

Sin (Activision)

Ultima IX (EA)

The X-Files (Fox Interactive)

T I M E L I N E

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

JANUARY '98

FEBRUARY '98

MARCH '98

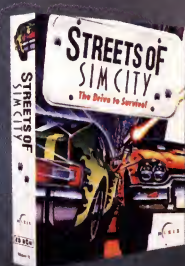
APRIL '98

YOUR MIDDLE FINGER

HAS BEEN YOUR

ONLY WEAPON

FOR TOO LONG





On the Streets of SimCity, it's **KILL** or be **ROADKILL**.
So forget the **CRUDE** hand gesture & try a flaming missile up the tailpipe.
Drive one of 5 fully loaded **Death** machines. Hurl **Smoke** screens from a
MUSCLE car. Toast your enemies with machine gun blasts from a **LETHAL**
bread truck. And turn **OPPOSING** road warriors into **SCRAP METAL** in
every city scenario—even imported SimCities. Or give them
a crash course in **Head-on** network play. Because on the
Streets of SimCity, you've got to **DRIVE** to **SURVIVE**.



When two tribes go to war

Our spies have returned with news of a new on-line sci-fi combat game from Trilobyte – the development team that brought the world

7th Guest – the name of which we can exclusively reveal to be: *Assault*. Dubbed as a 'massively multi-player 3D action combat game', *Assault* will use Trilobyte's own proprietary 3D technology to recreate a

'virtual war' between two different fantasy armies: alien Sway, or human Colonial Force. A beta test is on the cards, so keep your eyes on <http://www.tbyte.com> if you want to sign up for some.



DATA PAD

The Sixth Element

Bruce Willis may only have five, but masters of innovation, Maxis, have to deal with six elements in their newest non-*Sim* title. *Crucible* sees you controlling Stephen Hendry in a battle against – (snip – Ed). *Crucible* details a universe of just six planets, each dominated by a single elemental force – Earth, Wind, Air, Fire, Wood and Metal. The planets used to co-exist happily, but in the kind of twist that is necessary to make an interesting game, they've gotten kinda violent.

Your task is to seal the gateways on each world. Of course, being Maxis this isn't as simple as it sounds. *Crucible*'s most interesting feature is that the planets continually evolve as the player interacts with them. Even when the player isn't on a planet it continues to adapt and change so that each time you visit a world it will be a unique experience.

Crucible looks set to uphold Maxis' reputation for innovation and will be released mid-September. **Z**



First picture of arcade PC



Plane Crazy is one of a number of PC games to appear in arcades first, under the auspices of the Microsoft PublicPC initiative (a campaign which aims to encourage the adoption by the coin-op industry of high-powered PCs running accelerated games under Windows 95). They'll then hit the shops some months down the line. This way, we get to thoroughly check the game out before handing over our cash for the extended remix.

The PublicPC initiative kicks off in July in the US, but there is still no word of *Plane Crazy* making it over into UK arcades, which is a bit of a poor show if you ask us. It'll be November, when the home version is released, before we get to play the game over here.

Still, the initiative does have its advantages – like the demand it will create for graphic accelerator cards – so we can't really moan, can we? **Z**



(Left) The world's first shot of a *Plane Crazy* cabinet – it's an arcade machine with a PC inside! Now that's magic.

Win!
Redneck Rampage
game and 'goodie' bag

White Trash Word Search

Reviewed last issue (and recommended, incidentally), *Redneck Rampage* takes the first person action genre to new heights in bad taste – so it really isn't for those of you who are easily offended (and if you are easily offended, then don't write in complaining to us, you snivelling, whingeing hypocrite).

Yes – cussin', fartin', drinkin' and hollerin' all play a big part in this Duke-style shoot 'em up, so top laughs are guaranteed if you're easily impressed by foul language and the noise of someone floating an air biscuit (like we are).

So go ahead: win yourself a copy of the game, and a crapload of other stuff besides. Oh, and because there's booze involved, entrants must be 18 or over. Okay?

Simply find the hidden words in the word search and send your entry in to us. First five out of the PC Zone competition barrel win a copy of the game, a pair of Levi 501 jeans, a bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey, a lumberjack shirt and a rubber chicken (don't ask...). So squeal piggy, and get searchin'!



K	O	K	G	I	Q	M	U	B	K
H	C	N	C	N	B	O	Z	C	B
O	I	A	E	I	F	O	O	O	M
Y	L	C	B	M	H	N	N	J	O
R	W	L	A	Y	Y	S	G	N	F
I	E	F	A	O	R	H	B	A	O
A	S	E	J	M	O	I	R	B	V
H	Q	S	O	A	B	N	A	F	S
D	E	R	B	N	I	E	W	H	N
S	F	A	S	O	T	N	E	U	Q

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime tel no: _____

Yes I am over 18 signed: _____

Tick here if you are stupid: ☐

Answers to: 'Lookin' mighty purdy in them jeans, boy', PC Zone, CPCZ78B, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ.

Words to find:
inbred • hairyback • banjo
moonshine • bible • hick

Rules: All entries to be received by 20 August 1997. Entrants must be 18 or over. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. If you're reluctant to cut up your magazine (which we like to think you are), then send a photocopy instead. **Z**



MACHINE HUNTER™

"If comparisons must be made with
Loaded, Machine Hunter definitely comes
out on top" **PLAYSTATION PLUS 88%**



YOU'LL NEED ALL YOUR
SKILLS TO SURVIVE



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"PS" and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

Must Dash...

A new accessory is promising to change the way games are played for ever – although we wouldn't take too much notice of that

because that's what they all say. Anyway, this life-changing accessory is none other than Saitek's *PC Dash*, which plugs into the standard PC keyboard port and allows instant access to game functions that

previously required numerous keyboard presses. If it works it could make your gaming life that much easier, but let's not lose sight of the fact that there are people in the world with real problems.



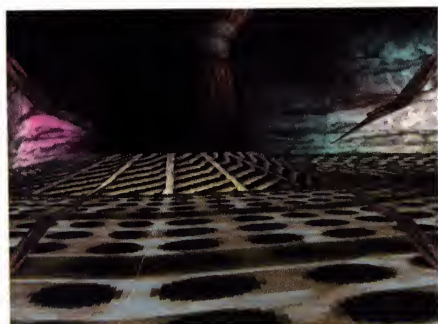
DATA PAD

Full steam ahead for Psygnosis



Psygnosis, Liverpool-based doyens of the PlayStation, are stepping up their PC development with a trio of releases which seem fair set to gladden the hearts of 3D accelerator owners everywhere.

G-Police is a futuristic gunship simulator set among the distant domed cities of Callisto. Taking charge of a powerful and destructive HAVOC chopper, you play the part of the fuzz 'n' buzz around a claustrophobic and noir-ish city environment which draws heavily on the films *Blade Runner* and *Outland*. Obviously you'll get the full complement of heavy weaponry to take out the bad guys, and it's also a relief to know that 'accidental' destruction of the local citizenry is viewed with indulgence rather than a request to hand in your badge. Featuring some 35 different missions, the FMV sequences used to drive the storyline shouldn't interfere too much with all that rampant 'death from above' action.



If piracy, smuggling and buckling your swash are more your bag though, you should make a mental note to check out *Overboard!*, which promises more shiver-me-timbbers antics than you could possibly shake a peg leg at. A humorous, arcadey look at piracy on the ocean wave, players will progress through five nefarious regions, raiding enemy ports, battling sea monsters, seeking out plump galleons and searching for that all-important treasure map – where 'X' will most definitely mark the spot.

Shadow Master is another 3D blast 'em up set in a dark fantasy universe which sees you taking on the eponymous omnipotent being who's intent



(Far left) Mechs and insects merge in *Shadow Master*. (Left) Nice sculpture in the alchove dere...



(Above) Some poor guy's ass is on fire! (Left) *G-Police* features some fantastic lighting effects, courtesy of 3Dfx.

on ravaging your homeworld. Featuring "beautiful graphics" (it says here...) and based on the artwork of Rodney Matthews (see every Prog album from the early '70s onwards and you'll know the bloke we mean), you'll guide your craft across the landscape of seven diverse and increasingly challenging worlds, battling the dark one's minions, completing missions and heading towards (gulp) the ultimate confrontation with the evil overlord himself. Graphically gorgeous, with an enormous playing environment, true 3D monsters and a full-on action approach should all combine to make this title one to watch out for.

All three games are scheduled for release in the autumn, and for more info you'd be well advised to check out the Website at www.psygnosis.com where you can also find details of the forthcoming *Manx TT* and *Monster Trucks*. **Z**



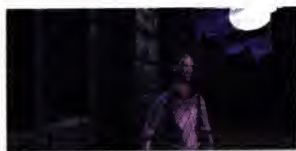
Unreal follow-up announced

Wheel Of Time is a new fantasy fest from Epic Megagames which is not only based on the best-selling series of books of the same name (by author Robert Jordan), but is also, officially, Epic's second *Unreal* 3D engine game.

An RPG epic which combines classic role-play elements with rapid gameplay, players will get to opportunity to command their own citadel, with the object of accumulating four seals from their opponents' strongholds.

Both offensive and defensive measures will be possible and interaction with NPCs will form a major part of the experience, with spells, traps and magical items to be collected, and assassination one of the favoured methods of advancement.

You'll be able to select one of four different characters from the series, including Amrylin Seat, the leader of the Aes Sedai, the militant head of The Order Of The Children Of The Light, plus the two personalities known simply as The Forsaken and The Hound. *Wheel Of Time* is expected to be seeing the light of day some time in the autumn. **Z**



THE SEQUEL TO THE AWARD WINNING *HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC*

EXPANDED: THE "TURN-BASED STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR"

✦ Four New Campaigns
And Storylines

✦ Dozens Of New
Heroes, Artifacts,
And Events

✦ 20 New Stand
Alone Maps

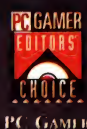
✦ Network, Modem,
And Internet Team
or Competitive Play
For Up To Six Players

HEROES IITM of Might and Magic

THE PRICE OF LOYALTY EXPANSION PACK



THE SUCCESSION WARS



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PC

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Another day in Pontefract

Yorkshire-based Alternative Software has announced a futuristic action adventure game. Set in the year 2125 (assuming

that man is still alive), *Project Paradise* will be a top-down 3D affair featuring three main characters hell-bent on destroying every pixel on-screen. The solo player can switch between the characters

to make the most of their differing capabilities in resolving various situations. Alternatively, there is a three-player mode whereby each of the triumvirate is assigned to a player for the duration.



DATA PRO

THE MAN WHO KNOWS



Welcome to the wonderful and frightening world of The Man Who Knows, where another month has been spent illicitly procuring snippets of industry information for your perusal. First port of call was the House Of Lords, my honorary membership proving useful. The Lord in question was one Campbell Of Croy, who raised a question concerning DMA Design's impending *Grand Theft Auto*, expressing fears that the game, to be published by BMG, would cause a spontaneous orgy of car theft, joyriding and driving onto yellow junction boxes. Lord Campbell's speech was greeted by a muted chorus of braying by those still awake, and he later had this to say: "I have been campaigning against motorizing crime for many years and I am concerned that a game that includes stealing cars and joyriding should be available to the public. I would not like to see this game go on sale, even with a BBFC classification. I'm dead set against any computer games of this nature that could encourage crime and if it does get a release I will raise it again in Parliament." Well that's very fucking righteous, but by Campbell's twisted logic anyone who's played *Doom* may become a chainsaw-wielding maniac, *Monkey Island* fans could take to the high seas and become pirates, and enthusiasts of *FIFA 97* might be prone to running around as if they have a broomstick up their arse. But thanks for your interest.

Meanwhile, back in the cut and thrust world of military flight simulators, there has been some childish squabbling over the use of trademarks, with publishers of the various F22 sims becoming overtly stropky. *NovoLogic*, having already released *F22 Lightning II*, claimed, prematurely as it turned out, that they had trademarked F22. Consequently, they intimated that they may Injunct *Interactive Magic*, should they go ahead with the release of their own *F22 Lightning*, and insisted that the name be changed. Meanwhile, back at the bat cave, *Lockheed Martin*, the manufacturers of the actual aeroplane, claimed that they retain the trademark to any of their military products. In response, *NovoLogic* acted swiftly and tied up a deal with the purveyors of hi-tech death, allowing them to use trademarks and logos in return for a royalty. *Interactive Magic* then hit back, pointing out that the F22 is funded by the US taxpayer, and therefore Lockheed Martin should not be allowed to sell licences for financial gain. The case continues.

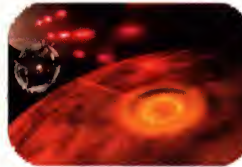
Following several months of rumour and hearsay, it has finally been confirmed that Bullfrog prime mover Peter Molyneux has quit to form a new company. Provisionally entitled *Lion Head*, Molyneux is joined in his new venture by *Theme Hospital* project leader *Mark Weir*, *Theme Park* programmer *Donald Macaskill*, and goblin writer *Simon Stammers*. Molyneux co-founded Bullfrog in 1987 and sold it to Electronic Arts in 1995 for a vast amount of money. He never appeared comfortable with the corporate culture though, and Lion Head looks like being a back to basics exercise. They will be based in the Guildford area and will initially work on one title at a time, with a staff of no more than 25. Molyneux is believed to have received a number of extravagant offers, notably from EIDOS, but it looks as though EA will be handling his first product.

Meanwhile, the ever-expanding, all-encompassing corporate monster that is *Electronic Arts* has snaffled up the not inconsiderable *Maxis*, creators of all things *Sim*. What is politely being called a merger should take effect by the end of August, and EA chairman *Larry Probst* had this to say: "Maxis' talented team has created a highly successful franchise for its *Sim* family of entertainment products. Its flagship title, *SimCity*, is one of the most valuable brands in our industry. We believe the addition of the *Sim* product line will help us achieve our goal to be the number one publisher of entertainment software for the PC." Presumably, by 'entertainment software' he means games.

And, finally, the ubiquitous *EA* have picked up Bungie's *Myth: The Fallen Lords*. Featured in last month's Hot Shots, it is a fantasy warfare gobblins cum *Command & Conquer* affair.

Thanks for coming. That's it.

Spock loses rag



News of a new Star Trek adventure game comes winging our way from Interplay.

Promising news for all lovers of pointy ears, polystyrene rocks, and "phasers full aft", the original *Star Trek* series crew – Kirk, Spock, Bones, Sulu, Chekov and Scotty – are about to be given yet another lease of life in a new

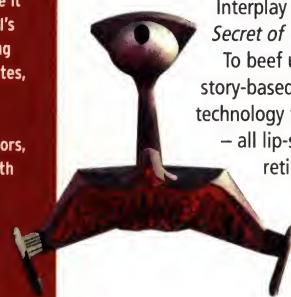
Interplay interactive adventure, *Secret of Vulcan Fury*.

To beef up the realism of this story-based puzzle 'em up, Interplay have utilised 'cutting edge' motion capture technology to recreate all the mannerisms and facial movements of each character – all lip-synched with the voices of the original actors (dragged out of whatever retirement home they are currently vegetating in). To further expand on the lush 3D rendered visuals, Interplay have employed the services of DC Fontana, a writer on the original *Star Trek* series. His credits include *This Side Of Paradise* (Spock inhales alien 'happy' spores and plays lute) and *Encounter At Farpoint* (distinctly pants pilot episode for *ST:Next Generation*).

Gameplay is expected to be very much in the mould of the fun *25th Anniversary* and *Judgement Rites* with you 'immersed' in six *Star Trek* episodes via a point 'n' click interface. No word on a release date, but more details can be found at www.interplay.com. Z



The original *Star Trek* crew get a new lease of life in Interplay's *Secret of Vulcan Fury*.



Actua 2, take two



If you saw our *Actua Soccer 2* piece last month, saw those screenshots and thought: "Wow, look at those vastly improved graphics", then you're a bigger fool than us for accidentally printing *Actua Club* shots in the first place. Did you notice the fogging and lighting effects? Did you see the high level of detail on the players themselves? No, 'cos they weren't bloody in there.

These shots, however, do show off *Actua 2's* atmospheric graphical tweakings to great effect – enhanced textures on shirts and faces, fog, rain, floodlit matches, meaty smells (you get the picture).

All together now: "Wow – etc." Z

Second time lucky: gasp at the atmospheric graphics in *Actua Soccer 2*.



FEEL THE SHATTERING EFFECTS OF WAR

In WWII air combat, anything could happen. In *Fighter Squadron* it actually does. Revolutionary flight advancements and "live environments" with individual object AI make everything you do — and don't do — affect your flight experience. So shattered windscreens have a real effect on your aircraft... and on your pride. *Fighter Squadron: The Screamin' Demons Over Europe* — the latest elevation in flight realism from Eric "Hellcats" Parker.

CONFRONT YOUR DEMONS THIS AUTUMN.

**FIGHTER
SQUADRON**
THE SCREAMIN' DEMONS OVER EUROPE



Live environments feature concussion effects, terrain deformation, and integrated road and rail systems which offer unparalleled interactions like tunnel fly-throughs.



Nine WWII aircraft duplicate plane physics for true-to-life dogfighting manoeuvres such as snap rolls, tail slides, Immelmans, barrel rolls and spin outs.



Customisable planes, an objective-based mission editor, multiplayer combat and native 3-D card support with up to 30 frames per second.

ACTUAL IN-GAME SCREENSHOTS

HOT Shots

Flight Unlimited II (EIDOS Interactive)

The follow-up to the best-looking PC flight sim ever created, *Flight Unlimited II* is currently on course to pick up where its predecessor left off – in a blur of graphical splendour. Looking Glass' weaponless stunt plane sim returns with even better digital texture maps – this time of San Francisco's famed Bay Area – in fact, over 8500 square miles of the stuff to fly over. Up to now we know of five available aircraft (including the 'infamous' P-51D Mustang [Don't ask me what the 's are for – Ed]), but more may be announced before *Flight Unlimited II*'s release in the autumn.

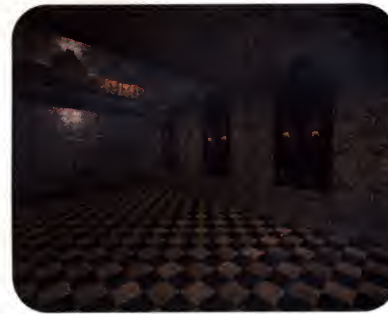
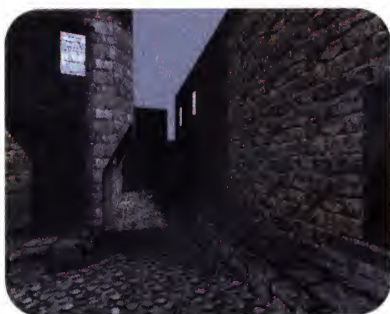


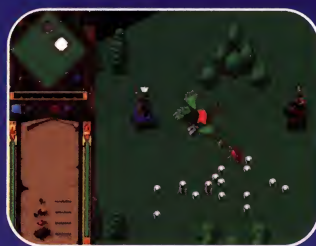
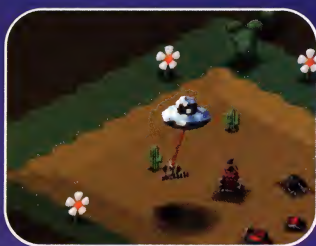
The Dark Project (EIDOS Interactive)

Warren Spector and his team have *The Dark Project* well underway, which is fantastic news for impatient RPG enthusiasts who are fans of his past work (*Ultima Underworld* for example – ring any bells?).

So far the game is looking, erm, dark, which is causing our art department a few problems. This apparent lack of lighting should do wonders for the in-game atmospherics though, and we here at *PC Zone* think *The Dark Project* could turn out to be one of the biggest hits of '98.

Looking Glass have regular updates on their Website at <http://www.lglass.com>, so go check it out 'cos it really does look the absolute business.





Tanktics (BMG Interactive)

Hey hey – more brand new in-game screenshots from DMA Design's *Tanktics*, not to mention the fabulously rendered poster-sized image created especially for *PC Zone*! *Tanktics* is coming along nicely we're told, and these new shots prove that Tom Kane and his band of merry men haven't been sat around scratching their arses all day and all night. The interface has changed quite a bit since we last saw it and more things have been added, such as new tank parts and a series of unusually-different single-player missions. Look out for a full preview of *Tanktics* in a forthcoming *Zone*.



WIN! WIN! WIN!

A Creative Labs 3DBlaster PCI Card

E

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT IF YOU WANT TO get the best from your PC this year you're going to need to get your hands on a 3D

accelerator card – and luckily for you we've TEN cards to give away to TEN lucky readers.

The 3DBlaster from Creative Labs is the card to have if you want to play the mighty *Quake* in glorious texture-mapped, accelerated hi-res with a frame rate to match. The card uses the much-lauded Rendition chipset and has 4Mb on-board to ensure that all the games designed to make use of Microsoft's Direct3D and Direct Draw, such as the excellent *Tomb Raider*, *Formula 1*, *Terracide* and *WipeOut 2097*, will look better than ever on your machine.

All you have to do to WIN yourself a 3DBlaster PCI Card and transport yourself to 3D gaming heaven is answer the simple questions below and send your entry to the address shown by the end of August.

Questions:

1. Which development team wrote *Quake*?

- ☐ id Software ☐ Sid Software ☐ Biddy Software

2. What is the heroine in *Tomb Raider* called?

- ☐ Lara Croft ☐ Lorra Laughs ☐ Bob Holness

3. Who does the race commentary in *Psygnosis' Formula 1*?

- ☐ Murray Walker ☐ Murray Mint ☐ Des Walker

Name:

Job Title:

Company Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime Telephone Number:

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.

☐ Tick if under 18 years of age.

Terms and conditions: All usual restrictions apply. For a copy of the rules please write to PC Zone at the usual address.

Send your entries to: PC Zone/Creative Labs Compo CPCZ78C, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, United Kingdom. Closing date for entries is 31 August 1997.

Here
chicky
chicky...



PC
ZONE

our price

CHART
Predictions

HIS MONTH SEES THREE GREAT NEW TITLES ENTERING THE OUR PRICE CHART – *Premier Manager 97* at £24.99, *Puzzle Bobble* at £14.99 and *Dark Forces*, out on White Label for just £9.99. And for fans of cars and motor racing, it also sees *Carmageddon* go straight into the Chart at the No.1 position.

July is also the month scheduled for the release

of *Dungeon Keeper*, the next big title from Bullfrog on the EA label. Makers of *Syndicate Wars* and *Populus*, Bullfrog promise even better things with *Dungeon Keeper*, so watch out for it.

Finally, to take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize give-away, just put pen to paper, answer the question below and send it in to: PC Zone Our Price Competition CPC278A, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK.

OUR PRICE QUESTION:
Who developed Carmageddon?

Rules and restrictions: All entries must be received by Friday 1 August 1997. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply.



WATCH
THIS SPACE
FOR MORE
NEWS FROM OUR
PRICE NEXT
MONTH!



Welcome to PC Zone's version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature the titles we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

1

CARMAGEDDON(SCI)
£24.99

2

**X-WING VS
TIE FIGHTER**(LucasArts)
£29.99

3

ACTUA SOCCER(Gremlin Interactive)
£7.99

4

**PREMIER
MANAGER 97**(Gremlin Interactive)
£24.99

5

PUZZLE BOBBLE(GT Interactive)
£14.99

6

**DARK FORCES
(WHITE LABEL)**(LucasArts/VIE)
£9.99

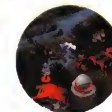
7

**CHAMPIONSHIP
MANAGER 2**(EIDOS Interactive)
£9.99

8

**C&C:
COUNTERSTRIKE**(Virgin)
£14.99

9

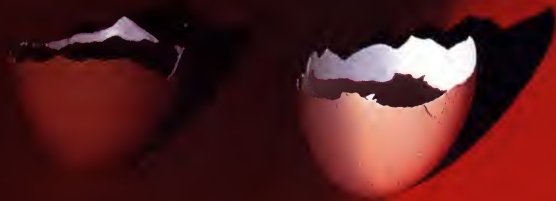
C&C: RED ALERT(Virgin)
£29.99

10

**THEME
HOSPITAL**(Bullfrog)
£29.99

DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.

KEEPER'S HERE.



dungeon KEEPER



YOU'RE ONLY DOING
GOOD, WHEN YOU'RE
BEING BAD.

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PC CD-ROM
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...Sorensen!

He calls George Lucas 'mommy'.*
He shaves with a bowie knife.**
And he thinks all game reviewers
should be hung.*** He's also
president of LucasArts (true). His
name is Jack Sorensen. And he's
across the table from *PC Zone's* own
Paxman, David McCandless.



HE TIME: ABOUT 3.15PM. THE PLACE:
Virgin Interactive's HQ in posh Kensington.
Jack is in a relaxed-stroke-jet-lagged
mood. He's come over to do some stuff and
also to meet up with (gasp) George 'Ewok'
Lucas, who's over here casting for the next three Star Wars
films. After we boot some stropky journalist from Empire
magazine out of the room, we get down to some serious
chat with the guy who apparently puts the 'ic' in 'nice'.

IN WHICH WE ASK ABOUT 'GEORGIE' LUCAS

PCZ: So how does George Lucas fit into all this
LucasArts stuff?

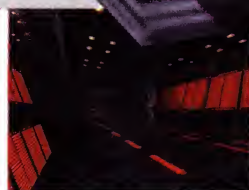
JS: He's my boss.

PCZ: Yeah, duh, but has he played *Outlaws* for example?

JS: He doesn't really play games. He takes a look at the stuff.
It's kinda like an intellectual pursuit for him in many ways.
He's fascinated by the developments, what we're trying to
do, the tools we use, how that's coming about, and how
that's really influenced the notion of pre-production in films.
The idea of thumbnail sketches and storyboards used to be
the way you'd board a movie, but now a lot of the time you're
building a set in 3D – sometimes primitively, sometimes more
elaborately – figuring out where your camera's going to move
in a 3D world. That came straight out of gaming, and George
is always interested in those things.

PCZ: Does he come into the office a lot?

JS: Not really. He's at the ranch. He's doing his own thing



(Above and left) A few
choice shots from the
glorious, the gorgeous,
the very close to being
released *Jedi Knight*.
"You are a member of
the Rebel Alliance and
a traitor."

now. A few years ago,
he had a lot more time. This last
year and next year he's got his own projects.

PCZ: Are Star Wars games, like Star Trek
games, resolutely faithful to every aspect of the universe?

JS: Well, obviously you want to make it *Star Wars-y*. But no,
George doesn't mind if we take some licence with certain
things. More importantly, we have the fans to worry about,
and we have our own fans within the company who wouldn't
let us get too far off the mark. Besides, that's the reason for
doing a *Star Wars* game – to find out something new. To do
the films over and over again would be boring.

PCZ: Has George ever vetoed anything?

JS: No. I can't actually think of anything. But we have
some people who are probably more rigorous than George.
So it doesn't get to the point where George is saying "no".
He doesn't really like to get involved at that level. He likes
to talk about strategies and long-term plans, about what's
happening with gaming genres – just the basic notions of
art forms which are commercial.

IN WHICH WE ASK ABOUT HIS GAMES

PCZ: What was the deal with *Outlaws*?

JS: Well, the reason behind *Outlaws* was not, 'Oh, let's
take *Doom* and make it a western'. The sad fact with the
first-person genres is that everything has been boiled down to
this frag-fest. So with *Outlaws*, rather than being a walking
aircraft carrier (as you could describe the *Quake* character),
you're pretty much limited to real weapons. You can't take
too many hits. It's all about slowing the game pace down.

PCZ: Will *Jedi* be the same?

JS: Well, it has to be more *Star Wars-y*. You'll have a
light sabre, but obviously that isn't going to work with a guy
on a third floor or someone 100 yards away. It's for close
combat. Of course, you also have force powers.

PCZ: And how will the light sabre work?

JS: We've tried a number of different ways to make the
light sabre feel right.

PCZ: Still working with mouse and keyboard?

JS: Yeah, it works really well. It takes 30 seconds to get used
to and then it's so intuitive.

PCZ: What's happening about *Jedi Knight*?

JS: Technically, it's all done. The levels are now finished. We're
just turning it into a good game, spending two or three
months on item placements and pacing – that sort of thing.

PCZ: What about the multi-player aspect?

What's Your Game?

JS: It's there, it's rocking, and it's more sophisticated than *Outlaws*. What's more, *Outlaws* is proving to us that we're not going to have any problems. We have 20+ players on the same level on the Internet right now, with no slowdowns at all.

IN WHICH WE ASK ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

PCZ: What do you think of DirectX?

JS: We have DirectX religion. Even though it's not perfect – it's a cludge, a very sophisticated cludge, but a cludge nevertheless – it's the right way to go. We have to spend a lot of time in order to make up for the deficiencies.

PCZ: So what do you think about 3D accelerator cards?

JS: *X-Wing Vs TIE* and *Jedi* will support the majors. The 3Dfx version of *X-Wing Vs TIE* is awesome. It almost looks like the movie. The 3Dfx is as good as the Nintendo 64, but there are too many horrible 3D cards out there which are getting bundled with new machines.

PCZ: And MMX?

JS: Oh, hmmm. I'd better not say anything. It doesn't really do anything for us. It's good for video and sound, but it doesn't do anything for us real-time 3D developers. I wish it did. It seems like separate cards on board is the future.

PCZ: DVD?

JS: Yeah, we have all the specs. It looks like it's just going to be a big CD-ROM. Games will come on one DVD and then they'll pack it full of demos and any other crap that comes along.

PCZ: It could be a scary return to Planet FMV.

JS: Of course.

IN WHICH WE DIVERT TO FILM GOSSIP

PCZ: These new films – are you privy to any secrets? Oh, and have you got any videos you can send us?

JS: You're joking. Everyone asks me that. We've been very involved in all the stages of the new films. We're only two years away – if I don't have a bunch of stuff going by the end of this year, we'll be stuffed.

PCZ: Is there going to be another Indiana Jones game – or film even?

JS: I couldn't possibly comment.

PCZ: Do LucasArts employees have to sign something to keep secrets?

JS: We keep it really tight. Only a few people have seen the stuff, and they only see the parts they have to see. It's going to be really cool, though. ▶

Monkey Island 3 – another great LucasArts legacy gone multi-platinum.



◀ IN WHICH WE ASK ABOUT STAR WARS

PCZ: How old were you when you first saw *Star Wars*? And were you amazed?

JS: It's weird when I think about it. I was not a huge fan. That summer I was 16 years old. I had a car. I was dating. I grew up in Orange County, next to Disneyland. When you were bored, you'd go to Disneyland or to see *Star Wars*. I saw it eight or nine times over the course of that summer – and I wasn't even that big a fan. Some of my friends were seeing it twice a week.

PCZ: But now you love *Star Wars*?

JS: Well, that's weird because for me *Star Wars* is the sequel.

PCZ: Yeah, yeah, but tell us which is your favourite of the trilogy?

JS: All the real fans like *Empire*.

PCZ: Hmmmm. We don't like *Empire*. Too much Yoda in it.

JS: Yoda was kind of cutesified by all the toys and stuff, but in reality Yoda's pretty tough and pretty obnoxious.

PCZ: We're not surprised. He's got Jim Henson's hand up his arse. And Jedi sucks because of the Ewoks.

JS: Everyone focuses on the Ewoks. Okay, the film's not that good, but those last 20 minutes are pretty amazing. George's cutting is brilliant. I actually think that last bit is the best of all three movies.

PCZ: Okay, let's test your *Star Wars* knowledge.

What are the first...

JS: Hey, I'm no big fan.

PCZ: Shuddup. What are the first and last lines of the Trilogy?

(Incredibly long pause. Sorensen realises he's on the ropes.)

JS: I've seen the *Star Wars* trilogy about four times in the last six months and I still can't tell you.

PCZ: Well, it's: "Did you hear that?" and "No, it's not like that. He's my brother."

JS: Oh.

PCZ: OK, who's your favourite Spice Girl?

JS: Oh god, I find that whole thing to be so... it's like a female version of Village People. Okay, Posh Spice.

PCZ: Good choice.

IN WHICH WE TALK ABOUT GENERAL STUFF AND GET INTO AN ARGUMENT

PCZ: What games are you playing?

JS: I play a lot of flight sims. I'm a devoted *TIE Fighter* fanatic, so I've been playing *X-Wing Vs TIE*. I think one of the biggest problems on the Internet now is that co-operative play is frowned upon. The coolest thing is four-player co-operative gaming against the machine. The notion that you're flying in together is great.

PCZ: So what's your favourite game ever?

JS: *Civilization*.

PCZ: Favourite *Star Wars* game?

JS: *TIE Fighter*.

PCZ: Not *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*?

JS: I actually really like *Star Wars Supremacy* at the moment. Oh, and *Mario 64*. I've got 34 stars to go.

PCZ: Are we going to be flying the Millennium Falcon any time this century?

JS: You never know.

PCZ: Why didn't you attempt more of a Command & Conquer-style game with *Supremacy*?

JS: We had always wanted to do a strategy game in a 'Sid Meier *Civilization*' mould. Like a sort of *Star Wars* 'Risk'. That's the global concept. C&C is a tactical battle game. This is a tactical strategy game. It's what we wanted to do.

PCZ: But you could do a C&C-style game with *Star Wars* stuff in it. It would sell millions.

JS: We're not so crap.

PCZ: Oh no, I bet you think games and movies are moving closer together?

JS: No, I think they're getting further apart. People always ask George this, but games are games, and movies are movies. We're as guilty as anyone else of overlapping games and movies. What was going on with FMV generally was a way of making computer games accessible to all. Take *Rebel Assault*, for example. None of us believed, 'Wow – this is the greatest game of all time'. But as an action arcade game that is easy to play and requires no manual, it works. It was never designed for hardcore gamers. It was designed as a way of being able to present the action and visuals of *Star Wars* and allow people to get right into it. Your average person barely knows how to click a mouse. *X-Wing Vs TIE* is way too hard for them. FMV was about different games for different audiences. We're not shooting any FMV at the moment, but we probably will do in the future.

PCZ: Oh great. More *Wing Commander*.

JS: *Wing Commander IV* is the high watermark for FMV games. You get what they paid for. Real sets, real actors, beautiful presentation – dull game. It was a mission disk for *Wing 3*. Technically, there's no change.

PCZ: While we're at it, is there anything you want to get off your chest?

JS: Yes. I do have a bone to pick with a lot of the journalism. The reviews I've seen of *Yoda Stories* have been like: "Well, this isn't a very good adventure game." Hello? It's trying to compete with *Solitaire*, not with *Full Throttle*, and *Rebel II* was not trying to compete with *TIE Fighter*. We're trying to give choice, not just for the audience but for our people, too. They want to build games they like. It's not me saying, "Take out the depth in *Rebel II*". The whole notion behind *Rebel II* was 'keep it moving', to give an idea that you're in a movie. Some of it works. Some of it doesn't. Some people get bored with it, whereas others think it's the best game they've ever played, because everything else is so hard.

PCZ: Well, fair enough but...

JS: The specialist press is too dogmatic. I wish games were reviewed for what they're trying to do rather than what everyone thinks they should be.

PCZ: Hmmmmmm.

JS: I think that's a real shame because I fundamentally believe, marketing hype aside, that you can pretty much look at a product to see what it's trying to do and see whether it's doing it well.

PCZ: Yes, yes.

JS: Does it succeed or fail? Was it worth the 30 or 40 quid?

PCZ: Conversation terminated. ②



Jack Sorensen – nice guy and wine drinker.



A glance at the LucasArts range reveals it is "indeed as powerful as the Emperor has foreseen".



(Left) *Outlaws* is not just *Doom* in a stetson, and according to Jack, shouldn't be compared to *Quake* and the Build-powered 3D shoot 'em ups.



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**GRAPHIC
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DAIKATAN



DAIKATANA DIARY

PART 1



QUAKE DEMON AND ROMERO LOVER **DAVID McCANDLESS** EMBARKS ON HIS PEPYSIAN CHRONICLE OF THE GAME *DAIKATANA*. IN THIS, HIS FIRST ENTRY, HE CHEWS THE FAT WITH THE GAME'S PRODUCER, EX-ID BOY, JOHN ROMERO, GETS TO LOOK AT SOME SCREENSHOTS, MEETS THE TEAM, AND GETS A LITTLE TOO SWEATY AROUND THE GROIN.

FANCY IT? READ ON...



Romero is the only boss who actively encourages you to abuse him. When we deathmatch, we're calling each other "butt" – (a stream of invective follows. The salty stream of language continues for at least another two minutes) and "arse lick".

We're speaking down the dog and bone to one of the ten-strong Ion Storm team currently working on *Daikatana*. "The funniest is when Romero plays Shawn Greene (ex-id bloke, now coder on the project). The amount of abuse is so

funny. If Romero loses, he'll break something. He smashed this keyboard up the other day. I swear to god – the carpet still has little keys all over it. Shawn has this mouse that Romero broke hanging up in his office like a trophy."

The Ion Storm office is in the Texas Commerce Tower, a rather large building with a hole in it. Sixty people – sixty *loving, caring* gamers – live here in holy matrimony with their projects. The office is blissfully quiet, all bar "the muffled thuds of rocket jumps and the sound of imperial troops being denied reinforcements".

"If you wanted to, you could totally spend your time playing deathmatch here – and get paid for it," says Andre Sverre Kvernmo, one of the level designers on *Daikatana*. "Most games take place after 6pm so that people can be a bit productive. The biz section play among themselves because they're scared of us."

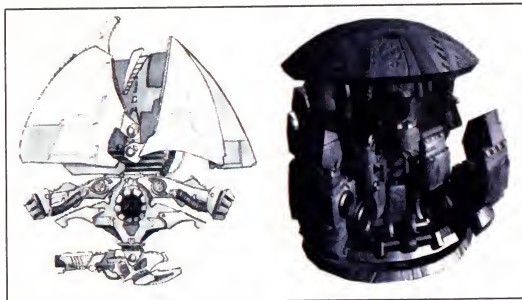
Daikatana literally means "big sword" in Japanese. It's magic. Look, here's the plot to prove it...

The year is 2455AD. Way way back in the 21st century, Tetsuo discovered the cure for Aids and as a result became really rich. He built himself a fortress, but continued to be interested in adventure, and especially in an ancient sword – *Daikatana* – which is supposed to have magic and time-travelling powers. After years of searching, he discovers the sword during an archaeological dig on Mount Fujiama and

(Top) Episode four is set in a nasty, futuristic San Francisco. Expect explosions. Expect earthquakes. Expect bad things to happen.
(Middle) *Daikatana* will feature 'real-world' locations, such as this jolly little housey with a tincey-wincey little cart and a large outcrop of green, algae-scummed rock.
(Bottom) "That's done on the *Quake* engine?" Sure is. *Daikatana* uses *Quake*'s new 'radiosity' lighting engine which creates softer, moodier lights and thick menacing shadows.

(Left) This is the main dude – Hiro Miyamoto – bearing an uncanny resemblance to John Romero (except a bit harder). And note that Ray Harryhausen influences all. The Greek episode is packed with many *Sinbad*-style animated 'skellingtons'.





(Left) The PainDrone – another obscure *Daikatana* weapon. (Below centre) Superfly Johnson – your ally and “big thick juicy dude”.

◀ Toshiro and his assistant, Jarred Benedict, start researching its magic powers. Unfortunately, Toshiro has been somewhat lax in his interview technique and has employed a power-mad sociopath as a lab assistant. He swiftly lops the aged scientist's head off, claims the Daikatana for his own, and whips back in time to steal the formula for the Aids cure and become fabulously wealthy. Both you and your luscious Japanese friend, Mikiko, were experimenting with a time-stasis bubble at the precise moment history changed, and step out to find everything has changed. Toshiro is dead.

The Daikatana is gone. And history has been changed. Jarred is now the inventor of the Aids cure. And it's his fortress you're standing in.

So, in the first episode, you, Mikiko, and SuperFly Johnson (a “big thick dude” you find in the dungeons) storm the Fortress, aiming to steal the Daikatana and set history right again. Once you've got the sword, you aim to go back to 2030AD and kill Jarred Benedict as he appears. Unfortunately though, there's a bit of a balls up.

The wrong switch gets flicked and the trio end up

in 2030BC. Stuck in Ancient Greece and pissed off. So the gist of episode two concerns finding more energy for the sword. But then when you teleport into episode three, you find yourself in 560AD, the Dark Ages. Doh! Not enough power. But finally in episode four, you get to 2030AD, and after much chopping and severing of limbs, have a showdown with Jarred. But then there's “a surprise ending and shit”. Got it? We asked John Romero for more...

PCZ: So is *Daikatana* going to be hub-based like *Quake II*?

Romero: No. It's definitely a linear thing; you move through it. Each level is completely new, with new sounds, new graphics – everything. That hub-based stuff is good for some games,



(Top right) Check out the great fogging effect. And all those skellies. Oh, and that mural on the left. Cool, no? (Bottom right) The designers are using all manner of scanned murals and Greek art to create textures for their levels.

**THINGS TO DO IN
DAIKATANA WHEN
YOU'RE NOT DEAD**
NO 1 (IN A SERIES OF 20)

PROPER EXPLOSIONS

“Our explosion effects are incredible. In most 3D games you can work out the safe distance. In *Daikatana*, when things blow up, they blow up into real shrapnel and shoot around depending on the scenery. So you have to dodge bits of scenery. There's this huge neon sign on one of the levels, and if you shoot it, it kinda pops and splutters. Shoot it another time and it tumbles to the ground, breaking the pavement and falling into the street below. Then all these bricks and shrapnel fly out at your head. It's different every time. It's got real gravity. You don't know where shit is going when you blow up stuff.”

SVERRE KVERNMO
(LEVEL DESIGNER)



DIARY

30 April 1997

“The first *Daikatana* cubicle war was held today. It started with a piece of paper landing on my forehead, decidedly being launched from Kee's space. A minute later, trashcans, important documents and Ion Storm's reserves of network cable were decorating

parts of the office. After a truce was settled, Dr Sleep gleefully admitted to throwing that first piece of paper.”

SVERRE KVERNMO

1 May

“I've just heard a snatch of Will's music for my first level. It is, as they say, ‘totally, totally awesome’. I can't get the tune out of my head and the intro just gives you the chills. Great stuff.”

“Kee's lighting tricks are going to give *Daikatana* a very different look



The smart thing is that explosions will be different every time in *Daikatana*, thanks to real physics and gravity.

but it gets boring going back and seeing the same shit over and over again. And each episode is going to have different texture sets, different palettes. *Quake* had one big mush.

PCZ: And how many...

Romero: (Romero is distracted, talking to someone else.) What the hell? Stupid power shit. It's been like that forever. (A few voices in the background.) Plugged into... Well shit, I can't tell. Whatever. Two monitors and two things. Too bad. It's gonna suck some more power. Goddammit. NT and 95. Pzzzt. SNAP. I'm gonna crack your skull later. Hello?

PCZ: Er, hello. How many levels per episode?

Romero: Eight. Goddamn power breaker turned off both my machines, and a bunch of deathmatch-only levels that I'm designing. I'm the Yoda of level design.

PCZ: So *Daikatana* has the vague RPG undertones of *Zelda* and *Chronotrigger*. Is it going to have stats and that?

Romero: You acquire experience and then go up to the next level which earns you one skill point, which you stick on one of five attributes. Speed makes you run faster until you're leaving tracer trails behind you. Jumping makes you jump higher and increases the range and power of your rocket jumps. Max Health increases your hit points and the limit health bonuses can boost you. What's cool is that you get bigger – your actual 3D model scales up – when you add another point, until by the time you reach level ten you're like this big thick dude.

PCZ: Big thick dude?

Romero: Big thick juicy dude.

PCZ: Right. Any other stats?

Romero: Yeah, there's Attack Power – how much damage



you do. At level ten, it's about half *Quake* Quad damage. And then there's Attack Rate. You can shoot faster, basically.

PCZ: How will the experience points system work in deathmatch? Will you be able to carry your single-player character into deathmatch?

Romero: No, no. Everyone starts on zero level stats.

It creates a level playing field because you get experience depending on who you kill. If you kill a higher level player, you're going to get tons of XP. If you slaughter a bunch of newbies, they're not worth anything. So it'll stop good players deliberately targeting newbies and it'll encourage newbies to take the big guys out.

PCZ: Sounds cool, if faintly egalitarian. What stage is *Daikatana* deathmatch currently at?

Romero: We're currently testing, adding more stuff.

PCZ: What sort of power-ups are there?

Romero: Well, there's standard stuff like invisibility. It's really cool – you turn into this kind of translucent wraith, but when

Great swords

Antiquated close combat weapon or dick-as-shiny metal sheath? The choice is yours. But you can't deny the old 'blade' has had a major role in our er, 'cultural heritage'. To wit:

EXCALIBUR

Dry-ice King Arthur simulator, notable for Helen Mirren getting her kit off (again), Patrick Stewart doing a turn as a knight with a posh voice, and for some hilarious continuity errors, such as 'Wellington Boot In Joust Scene' and 'Knights Smoking Cigarettes' (check out the bit when Camelot gets attacked).

LIGHT SABRE

Probably one of the most famous blades of all time. From *Star Wars* ("Your father wanted you to have this") to the Emperor fondling Luke's in *Jedi*, the light sabre is a ginormous symbol of a Jedi's ability. And no more proof that the 'dark' side of

The Force is an dastardly evil, willy-waving homosexual cabal and the 'light' side is some didactic right-wing family-orientated ethos (I'll explain this later).

YOJIMBO

Most impressive Samurai flick, directed by the Japanese master Akira Kurosawa. This film – about a scruffy, but ninjascope, Samurai mercenary who takes on an entire town of bad guys – was remade as *A Fist Full Of Dollars*. It features some real-life *Daikatana* action as well as the most awesome of ultimate scenes when the two arch Samurais have a face-off and stare at each other for like, ten minutes.

HE-MAN'S SWORD

"By the power of GraySkull!" Gayskull, more like.

PORK SWORD

Another word for 'penis'.



from *Quake*. I mean, a bunch of us were just standing here running through my level, dazzled at just how un-*Quake*like it truly looks."

DR SLEEP

the wittiest, crudest, coolest, up-to-date PC mag in the UK (or anywhere else). Really miss it since moving from England – sniff. (Hey – that's us! Ed.)

SVERRE KVERNMO

1 May

"Ra! Just heard we're doing a '*Daikatana* diary' thingy with *PC Zone*! For the unfortunate among you who haven't experienced *Zone*, it's just about

7 May

"Starting to get a good feel for the level I'm working on! I've been trying to convince the *Quake* engine to let me make a huge outside area

and it's grudgingly starting to comply. An ominous black skyscraper is the order of the day, jutting out of a coastline ravaged by earthquakes. Nothing like a good old-fashioned phallic symbol."

SVERRE KVERNMO

11 May

"Well, it's a mighty beautiful Sunday afternoon and I'm stuck at work trying to

make something that looks convincingly like ropes. The first level is essentially finished except for some cool extra details, which will be added some time this week."

Fave quote at the moment:

"ASSY NIPPLES!" – Squirrel. The first *Daikatana* deathmatch was played today, using dog-launchers.

JOHN DR SLEEP ANDERSON

Meet the Daikatana dudes

JOHN ROMERO Game designer, Chairman, and Ion Storm co-founder



At the sweet age of 29, ubergames player Romero is basically running the shop. He's gone from digging ditches in summer to driving large cars over small amphibians. His favourite *Quake*-land insult is: "Suck it down!" (What and how much?) Favourite game: *Quake*. Favourite pastime: *Quake*. Middle-name: *Quake*. A pattern doth emerge...

KEE KIMBRELL Lead Programmer



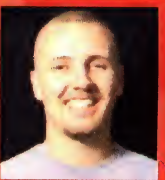
Male. Earned his stripes coding oil and sales software, moved onto dial-up games server DWANGO and then landed job as lead hex-boy on *Daikatana*. John Romero, apparently, is "incredibly funny and talented", but then his favourite game is *Eye Of The Beholder II*. He likes "furry goats, the taste of dry mud, and long walks through the streets of Harlem". Oh and he's 31.

SHAWN GREEN Programmer



True to form, the Ion Storm enigma 'Monsieur Le Mysterie', Shawn did not respond to our questionnaire. The Quentin. All they would tell us is that he used to work at id software, is 25 (apparently they cut him open and then counted the rings) and is married with a daughter. C'est tout.

JOHNATHAN WRIGHT AI Programmer



Obviously blessed with a single-celled organism fetish, Johnathan, or 'Amoeba' as he prefers to be called, numbers 26 of our Earth years. In between coding the 'cleverness' of the *Daikatana* monsters, he sucks Romero down with this quote: "Actually, I've never had a better boss" – and just loves *Ultima VI*. Favourite Spice Girl: "The redhead."

CHRISTIAN DIVINE Screenwriter



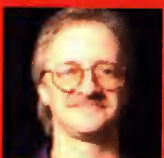
He writes the scripts which make grown men cry. Like Tarantino, he's a former video shop employee and accomplished screenwriter whose short film *Technorgania* was recently shown at two film festivals (woo). Favourite platitude: "Dreams do come true," he says, "when you don't give up."

PETER MARQUARDT Associate Producer



Get this! Peter was El Mococo, the bad geez in *El Mariachi*, that film made for one pence by Robert Rodriguez. Hey! And he's over six feet tall and his hobbies include pornography, drinking, cruising local malls and "drinking whiskey while cleaning myself". He, ladies and gentlemen, is 32.

JOHN W ANDERSON Level Designer



At 40, Dr Sleep is the oldest member of the team, but certainly the coolest. Witness: Beatlemania, "maniacal" Monty Python fan, adoptive father of 11 cats, biological father. He rocks. He's quite a good level designer too, having worked on all manner of *Doom* stuff. He worked in a coalmine for 2.5 years, too.

MATT HOOPER Level Designer



Woo! Somebody who does exercise. Matt is a key player in Ion Storm's flag football squad and three-man basketball team. He previously worked at Hipnotic on the superlative *Scourge Of Amargon*. His nickname is 'DaBug' and he's 28.

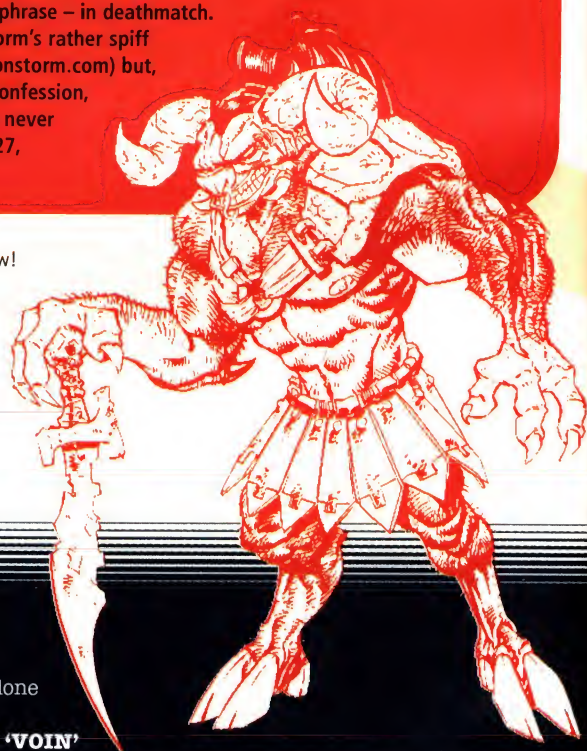
SVERRE KVERNMO Level Designer



Our friend and yours, British-educated, slipper-wearing Sverre once slept on my sofa and occasionally calls me 'Mommy'. He's a great level designer and has just accidentally moved into the gay area of Dallas. His favourite film is *The Shawshank Redemption* (a prison film, incidentally, is the choice of someone who has just accidentally moved into the gay area of Dallas). He's 26. And rich.

NOEL STEVENS Webmaster/Assistant Weapons Programmer

"Suck it down you hairy f**king ape" is Noel's favourite phrase – in deathmatch. He 'does' Ion Storm's rather spiff Website (www.ionstorm.com) but, in a brutal self-confession, admits that, "he never goes out." He's 27, by the way.



◀ you stop, you're completely invisible. Then there's the Golden Soul, which is 100 per cent maximum health. And then there's the MegaShield, which gives invulnerability for 30 seconds – you get sparks flying off you when you pick that up.

There are also five artefacts, one for each skill, which will temporarily boost your powers for 60 seconds – ie make you faster or whatever. There'll be a HUD-style pop-up menu to use for adding points to skills and you'll also have an inventory so that you can pick up some artefact or a power-

up, bind them to a hot key, and then Pow! You start glowing and kicking ass.

PCZ: Are there any other major deathmatch revisions?

Romero: Yeah, there's going to be semi-random respawn. It will look at all the spawn points and choose the one furthest away from the nearest player. And we may also be adding

a lot of animations for the monsters done as well."

PETER 'VOIN' HUSHVAHTOV

5 June

"The Crossbow is very cool indeed when used in combat. Like seeing guys roaming about looking like pin cushions. And when they

gib, can you imagine pieces of the enemy, already on sticks just ripe for barbecue? Yum! Can't help thinking what *Quake* would have been like with this."

CHRIS JOHNSON

◀ 13 May

"Heard tell that Noel dealt out two *Quake*-based beatings to someone in the company. That person proceeded to scream, kick a box around the room, then his garbage can, almost knocking his Testarossa model off his monitor. Oops – did I give it away?"

TOM HALL

4 June

"Played an extremely early version of *Daikatana* deathmatch today – Crossbow was the weapon of choice. It was fun watching the guys running around with arrows stuck in their skulls. Can't wait until all the weapons are in.

I'm working on artefacts right now, adding more polys and making them look more realistic. Animators are getting



deathmatch 3.0 rules – like old *Doom* DM 1. The weapons stay where they are when they're picked up, only ammo and power-ups respawn as this stops people dominating the RL straight away.

PCZ: What sort of weapons are we going to be seeing?

Romero: Each of the four time periods has seven new weapons, so you can say to someone:

"Hey dude, let's play Greek deathmatch."

"Yeah, cool. I'm gonna kick your ass."

"No way man. I'm gonna kick yours."

"Uh-uh? Nope."

So in 2455AD, your basic weapon is the Pistol Whip, the butt of your pistol. No ammo required. Then you get the Glock

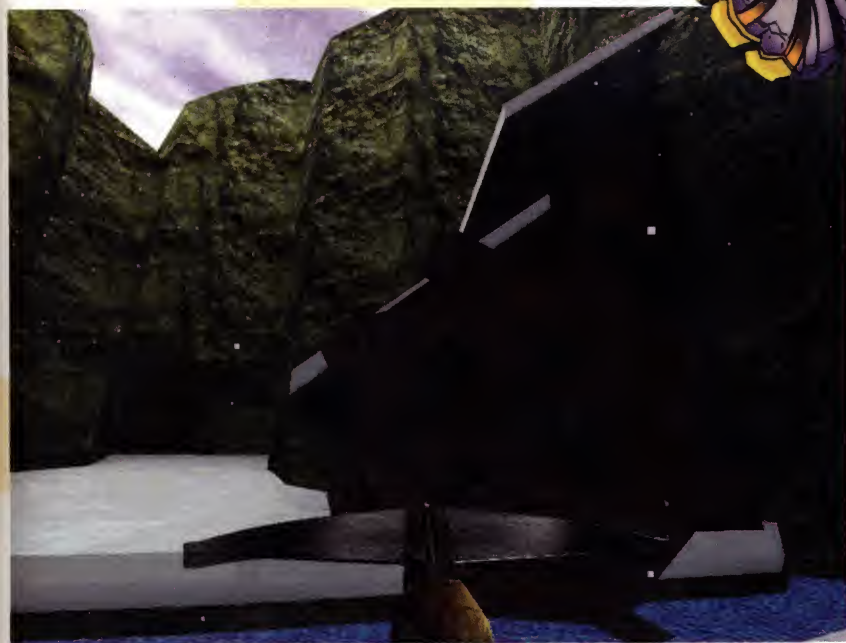
9mm and then the Ion Blaster. It fires a green ball which is similar to the BFG, but not as complex. Then there's the C400 Vizotigo, which fires lumps of C4 explosive that stick to people and blow up. Then you get the Shot Cyclor 6, a six-barrelled cross between a shotgun and a gatling gun. Then there's the SideWinder, which is made up of two mini-rockets on either side. You can do cool rocket jumps with that, but for double the damage. Then there's the ShockWave, which is like the BFG of the level. It fires a huge ball which bounces like the FireMace in *Heretic* and then explodes in concentric rings with particles and massive damage. Then in other episodes, like the Greek, there's Midas' Golden Grasp which is like this glove and anyone you

THINGS TO DO IN
DAIKATANA WHEN
YOU'RE NOT DEAD
NO 2 (IN A SERIES OF 20)

CLEVER LEVELS

"The levels are going to have AI as well. When a player goes over a certain area eight times, they're obviously lost or looking for something. The level will realise and trigger something – a visual clue – to set them on the right path."

SVERRE KVERNMO
(LEVEL DESIGNER)



(Top left) Not only will you have a crossbow but you'll also be able to burst through doors. (Bottom left) A rotating wheel churns up the water while proper Christmas card snow falls. (Left) The rather big-bosomed Mikiko, who also bears more than a passing resemblance to John Romero.

6 June

"Still working on the level Tower Of Crime. More specifically, a shuttle that will provide the exit from the level by means of a skyway. Also working on fighting these weird urges I have: stop smoking, lead a normal life etc. Weird! Do you think I need to see the doctor?"

SVERRE KVERNMO

6 June

"Doh! I wish I had known earlier in the week that our little *Daikatana* hero wasn't

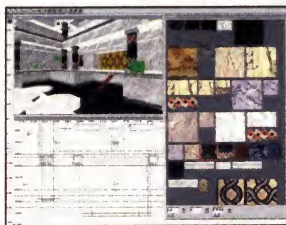
ambidextrous... converting the models to right-handed from left-handed."

CHRIS JOHNSON

7 June

"Most of the weapons for the E3 show have all their code base finished and are in the process of having models and textures completed. The Glock, Crossbow, IonBlaster, Pulserifle and the Sling will be ready for E3."

NOEL 'THE SHADOW' STEPHENS



(Above) Little-known fact: the level designers (or World Creators, as they are known) occasionally use shareware *Quake* level editors to add special frills like arches or carved brushed to their environments.



In the pock-marked nightmare world of 21st century San Francisco, your gun – which looks vaguely like something out of *Aliens* – is your only comfort.

◀ touch turns to gold, so you gotta hammer them (they only take quarter damage) or blow them into lava. There's also the Hand Of Zeus which is a massive lightning attack.

PCZ: Any more?

Romero: Er, yeah. Nhars Nightmare Pentagon, which summons ghosts and rips their skin off and scares them to death. The Taser Hook is an electrical grappling hook, which is like an explosive hook that buries itself into other players. You lock onto them and start dumping out the juice. There's a cool Cordite Cluster too, a flash grenade which blinds everyone. Then you can just wade into them.

PCZ: Are we going to see loads of gibs?

Romero: Total gibs. We're going to bring back that *Doom* gib. You know, the one which was like a little pile of red meat with bones and shit in it. I love that gib.

PCZ: Yeah that's was cool. Are you going to support QuakeWorld?

Romero: Maybe. I don't like QuakeWorld.

PCZ: Okay, but everyone seems to be using the Quake engine. Hexen II, Sin etcetera. Isn't there a danger that all these games will look the same?

Romero: Yeah, well we're using the *Quake* engine, the enhanced version with a new lighting engine called Radiosity, which is much more dramatic and realistic (you even get shadows on the 3Dfx version). There's 20 frames per second on all animations and we've got true rotation – far superior to the Hipnotic patch. We've got a bunch of new environmental effects that *Quake* doesn't have – fog, rain and snow.

PCZ: Fog? Cool.

Romero: Yeah, and it's done in software so everyone will have it. The same with rain – it's proper particle rain.

PCZ: Does it make you slip around and stuff?

Romero: No, it doesn't affect the players' movement – you don't slide over and shit (although there are some icy bits). Okay, it doesn't



splash on the surface of water. That's just too processor-intensive.

PCZ: What else is new?

Romero: There's going to be a real sky with 360 degree spherical maps, which means you'll feel like you're in a world. We're all using the same technology, so everything has to be innovative. We want it to feel like a fundamentally different game. I'm dumping that menu system. We're having a Ring Menu system, like on that SNES game *Secret Of Mana*.

PCZ: What about the artificial intelligence? Are the monsters going to be as dumb as those in Quake?

Romero: Jonathan did some really cool work on the AI. As you go through a level, you're invisibly mapping it for the monsters. Monsters will go wherever you go, roam freely, and hunt you down. So if you hang out in a corner and heal yourself, you'd better be ready for something to come round and find you.

PCZ: Yeah, but what about these NPC characters? Do they have anything 'upstairs'?

Romero: Mikiko and SuperFly don't do stupid stuff. They will start blasting if you get attacked, but they'll avoid shooting you if you get in their line of sight. If they need health, they'll find it or get it off you. They act on their own, but you feel like they're helping you. You're the hero and they never take over. You can give them commands. They'll ask you things. If they get into trouble, they'll call for help. If they die, you may be able to revive them with special potions.

PCZ: Will there be a map in this one?

Romero: Map? Dunno. Maybe an overhead map thing. It's not high on our priorities. It may be like when you go NOCLIP in *Quake* and look at the level from the outside, but it only shows where you've been.

PCZ: So is Daikatana going to be cool?

Romero: It's going to rock.

Next month we visit the Ion Storm offices in Dallas, chew the fat, burn rubber, drink stuff, and generally waste valuable resources. **Z**

Some 2000AD-influenced warrior, but still an impressive adversary.



THINGS TO DO IN DAIKATANA WHEN YOU'RE NOT DEAD NO 3 (IN A SERIES OF 20) ORGY AS DECOY

"In this tower, this skyscraper, you need an access card to get to the top. You've cleaned out all the bad guys on the lower floors. There's no one left. So when you approach an intercom system, one character suggests that you trick the gangsters into coming down. So SuperFly goes to the intercom and says, 'Yo guys! We've got some girls down here who want some fun. Boom! Boom!' And the female character goes 'ah ah' in the background. So they come down. But it's an ambush and you kill them."

**JOHN ROMERO
(HEAD HONCHO)**

◀ 11 June

"Anyway, it looks like some heads are definitely going to turn at E3. Got the models done for the weapons, and continue to work on the ones for the final product.

The levels are beautiful...

I can't say anything else.

Visually exciting, foreboding, sometimes claustrophobic, and beautiful all at the same time... it's really a sight to behold.

"Rode in John's Testarossa last week. You know how, when you're taking off in a jet airplane, you think, 'Wow, that's some pretty fast acceleration'? Well, it ain't. Maybe if you were in an F-15 you'd have something to compare. All in all, I have a pretty damn cool job."

NELNO Z



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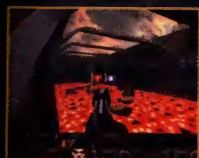
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FIGHTING FORCE

Part One



Excuse me sir, but I appear to have stepped in some doggy-do. Any chance of me scraping it over your face?

The start of a two-part look at the new game from Core Design that isn't *Tomb Raider 2*, but promises to be as big – not just because the lead character is another top-heavy psychobabe with a ponytail. If **Paul Presley** was a psychiatrist he'd have a field day probing their psyches.

Y

YOU KNOW THOSE TV SITCOMS WHERE someone will be taking a drink and then their best friend/flatmate/illegitimate lovechild will tell them a piece of surprising news and the drink will then be sprayed from the mouth across the room in a comical fashion? Well it really happened to me the other day. Really. It wasn't a set-up. It wasn't part of an elaborate attempt to convince a female member of the species that I truly was possessed of a GSOH. It was just utterly spontaneous and the studio audience that lives in my head and follows my every move was collapsing in the aisles with laughter. OK, so I guess you had to be there.



I was reading the *Fighting Force* design document that the PR lady from Core Design had given me over the breakfast table (what she was doing at my breakfast table was anyone's guess), and I had just swigged a mouthful of coffee when I read the following line: "A man of great wealth, the evil Dr Dex Zeng [the main villain of the game] is in fact Dr Timothy Leary." SPLLLTHHHH!!!

Who?

Timothy Leary? What, the Great Experimenter? The Harvard professor who did a shitload of LSD and Marijuana in the '60s and '70s, was arrested by the US police for being "the most dangerous man in America" (according to Nixon), broke out of jail by fixing the answers to a psychological test that he himself invented in order to get placed in a minimum security prison from where he promptly hopped over the wall, influenced a generation of peaceniks and recently died live on the Internet (well almost – he was going to and had a webcam set up to constantly monitor him, but his actual moment of passing took place away from his computer). The man's a legend. And now he's a villain in a computer game. At least he can't sue.

He can try to blow up the entire world though. Which forms the plot of Core's *Fighting Force* – the first (as far as I can remember) totally three-dimensional scrolling beat 'em up. By which I mean that you have a character, or characters who have all the fighting versatility of their *Tekken* counterparts and an environment that's almost as open and free as *Tomb Raider*.



Each character gives you a separate set of fighting moves to play with. Smasher, for instance, takes advantage of his immense strength to physically overpower his opponents.



Smasher's career in the field of valet parking was a short-lived affair.

It's arcade fun in the traditional sense (minus the coin slots, fag-stained carpeting and hordes of 12 year old delinquents hogging the machines), but with a '90s, polygonal twist. Remember all those side-on fighting games that appeared about six years ago? The ones that involved one or two players steadily progressing along a moving

background, fighting off four or five enemies at a time and were usually set in urban hell-holes. Either that or they were licences involving X-Men, Ninja Turtles or Bernard Cribbins (*I don't remember that one* – Ed). Well, *Fighting Force* is a three-dimensional version of those.

Places to go, people to kill...

Your mission of destruction takes you to various locales, all set in the kind of near-future urban nightmare that all American cities are inevitably heading towards. And while the game purports to be fully three-dimensional, in truth the levels are a combination of 'total freedom' 360 degree locations and more restricted two-dimensional areas that are viewed in a 3D *Tekken*-style fashion.

You're probably thinking, "Con! They say three dimensions when in truth they mean only two. Pshaw!" Well first, stop being such a ponce, and second, it's more logical than it sounds. Exterior locations (car parks, normal parks, city streets, air bases, etc) all allow you to wander around at will, dishing out pain from any angle you see fit. Interiors (corridors, office reception areas, train stations, submarines, etc) are naturally restrictive and so the camera stays in just the one axis, zooming in and out



Product details

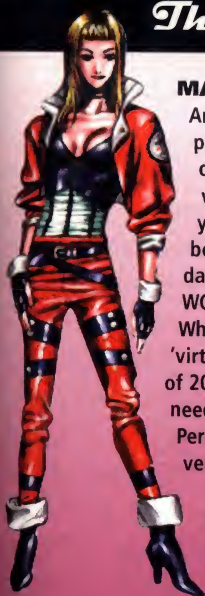
Developer: Core Design

Publisher: EIDOS Interactive

Website: www.core-design.com

Release date: September

The characters



MACE DANIELS

Am I reading too much into this or is Core's character profile trying to subtly suggest some kind of lesbian overtones in their newest 'babe' character? I quote verbatim: "Mace is aware of her sexual magnetism, yet she couldn't care less about men. She is always being pursued without giving ANYONE the time of day. This makes her a fighter that men AS WELL AS WOMEN envy" (sic). Is it just me?

Whatever the case, Mace is a pretender to Lara Croft's 'virtual sex kitten' crown. Vital stats of 38-22-38, an IQ of 200, 21 years old, 126lbs... (I know, I know. Do we need this much information? No, but it's there anyway.) Personally, I can't wait for the 'live' version of this one.

HAWK MANSON

I hate people like Hawk Manson. I mean, let's take the name for starters.

Hawk Manson. How's he expected to survive through life with a name that's such an obvious attempt to be macho? People will laugh at him everywhere he goes. It's like being called Blade or Hunter or Wolf. If we're being honest here, his name should really be Subconscious Compensation For Tiny Penis Manson.

Which also goes to explain his overly muscular physique. Anyone with even half a life wouldn't be able to spend the necessary amount of time at the gym that this guy has without resorting to steroids. Meaning that he's probably never had sex. Ever. And he's got a stupid haircut. (*Look who's talking* – Ed.) I hate him for no good reason at all, but then I'm irrational like that.



BEN 'SMASHER' JACKSON

Now here's a really dodgy role model to include in a computer game. Smasher is basically a slave. He's Hawk's personal rent boy. Hired out by a corrupt prison guard, Hawk uses Ben as muscle on big jobs before returning him to his tiny pen to continue travelling the Bourneville Boulevard with his cell mate. He's also thick as pigshit, which means that rather than engaging enemies with cutting remarks and Wilde-esque witticisms, he prefers to smash things up and then use the remains as weapons. Large trash cans, car engines, small children, large children, school buses full of screaming children that are gradually having their heads crushed under the pressure of his large biceps, etc...

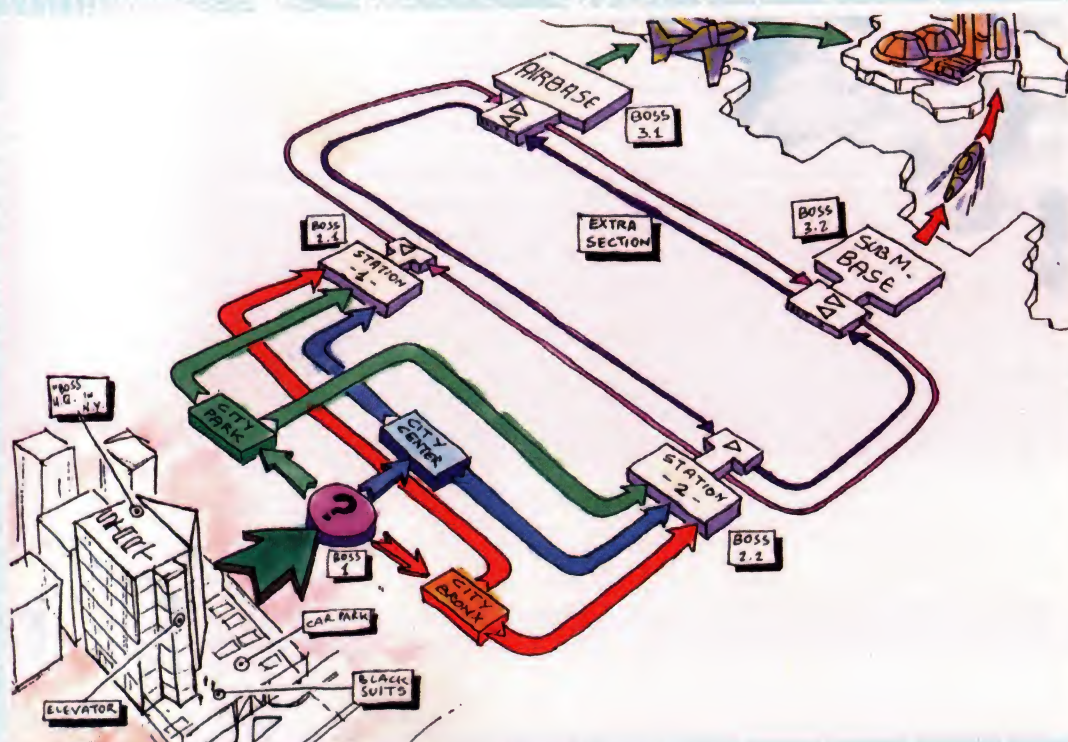
ALANA MCKENDRICK

Or Baby Spice. A 17 year old who was subjected to various drug experiments by her father – Dr Zeng!!! The end result of all these hideous drug tests is a rebellious, warehouse party-loving teenager who utterly loathes her parents and firmly believes the world owes her a living. Which just goes to prove that liberal parents are no more effective than conservative ones.

Naturally she's out for revenge, and so when Mace calls and says, "Hi Alana? Listen, me and a few buddies are going over to kill your Pop. Fancy tagging along?" she jumps at the chance. And, of course, who better to take into a heavily-armed killer fortress with hundreds of gun-toting villains trying to dismember you at every turn than a teenage girl who's only known special power is the ability to fall instantly in love with any boy-band going?



(Editor's Note: Naturally, Paul's views are entirely his own. No doubt the characters in *Fighting Force* will be a sterling bunch of heroes in the traditional sense that are fun to control, blessed with all sorts of exciting moves and special abilities and will suit the game perfectly. Paul's just in a bit of a mood, that's all.) Hmmph.



This early design map shows the main locations in the game. In order to keep the playability up, you're not limited to one route only. There are several paths you can take to reach the final confrontation.

where needed but generally forcing you to move in the right direction. After all, when the world's at stake, you don't really want to waste time exploring broom cupboards. Unless it's to use one to split someone's rectum open (er, the broom, not the cupboard).

Each stage is filled with more psychopaths than a *News Of The World* story about the NHS, and everyone wants to kill you. If they can first take some time to pound your face until it resembles John Merrick, even better. Among the roster of human *canaille* that you'll be facing are besuited gangster types, baseball bat-wielding street punks, vampish women carrying whips (natch), zombies (not real ones, but gang members who fashion themselves after the undead), roller bladers with real blades on their wheels, SAS types, martial artists, jetpack pilots, burly dockworkers (ahem) and motorbike dudes with swords. Of course, there are a fair number of innocent civilians around but that's not your problem.



They shouldn't be thick enough to go outside in such a violent world. Scum.

Forget the world

As well as the main game, Core are promising a two (possibly four) player 'arena' mode in the manner of a traditional 3D beat 'em up. A full range of 'combos' and special moves are included in both games, which in essence makes *Fighting Force* two games in one. Plenty of arenas will be available, but it's up to the player to gain access to them by beating some of the end-of-level guardians in the main game. Which is a nice incentive – make progress in one game and you'll be rewarded in the other. If only all games were so considerate.

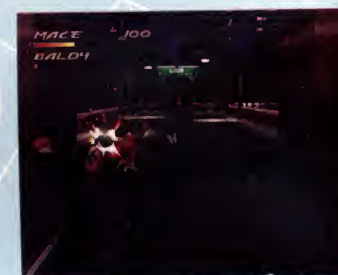
Next month: we probe beneath the surface of the game to find out about the characters' fighting abilities, what weapons are on offer and spend some quality time with the programmers, designers and sundry hangers-on. Probably with some silly pictures of the team. 2



One of Hawk's special moves would appear to be Wind of Might. Apparently.



(Above right) No, I do not 'fancy a shag'. Creep. (Above right) Mace's years as a Riverdancer finally pay off. (Above centre) Bruce Willis makes an impromptu appearance.



mIND games

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

Bradley Elwood Gwanton
24
Rookie

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

Ok I'm going in.
This place is real
dark I can only
just make out
some packing
cases bearing
256

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

Something's in
the corner.
It's small, scuttling
around. Rats??

temporal/ memory []
emotion []

occipital/ visual []

ET:G

ET:G

ET:G

frontal/ intellect []
planning []

parietal/ sensory-
motor []

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

Just sweep the TRACKER
across the room...
like they taught us
in training.
Regular sweeps.

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

This thing's
heavy-
feeling tired-
should have
gone to bed
earlier last

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

There! Whats that?
It's a Brainsucker!!
Moving fast
to my left.
AIM!!!

ET:G

ET:G

ET:G

Heart rate/
[] [] (REG)

Cerebral cortex
Stimulus/ []

Sigma 1.5T SYSAMRS10C0

Fire two bursts...
aim two more
bursts
aim low-did
that hit??What
a stink!!!!

Directions/
(slow) [] []

Anger/ []

Receptors concentration level..HIGH

night-I'd
better give
Carla a call
when I
get back.

Auditory
function/ []
Smell/ []

Adrenaline supply/[] []

Don't
stand
there
watching it!
Get a bead
on it.

ET:G

ET:G

ET:G

Auditory/
[] [] (REG)

Smell/ [] []

ET:G

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STARCRAFT



Warcraft aficionado Chris Anderson flew to LA to take a look at Blizzard's latest creation. Can they really have topped *Diablo* and *Warcraft 2* with *Starcraft*? Read on.

T

HE BLIZZARD SUCCESS STORY IS AN impressive tale indeed. Two years ago nobody had heard of the LA-based developers, then suddenly a copy of *Warcraft* arrived at the offices of PC Zone.

It was handed straight to me, I played it for a couple of days and gave it a respectable score of 75. This sort of set me up as the obvious candidate to review *Warcraft 2*. The sequel had all-new SVGA graphics, more units and enhanced gameplay and I awarded it a score of 82, enough to guarantee it a place in the PC Zone Recommended hall of fame. Not enough to elevate it to Classic status though, which is why I was amazed when people started raving about the game on the Internet. Gamers from all over the globe were swapping *Warcraft* levels and cheats and generally spoiling all over the place about how brilliant it was.

The game then went on to sell an incredible 1.6 million worldwide, prompting Blizzard to release the now obligatory 'mission pack' as soon as they could get it out the door. In some ways then, *Warcraft 2* can be seen as being almost solely responsible for building the



Take the addictive gameplay of *Warcraft 2*, add the tension of real-time strategy with intelligent enemies, and finally add the absolutely stunning graphics of *Diablo*. Stick the lot in a futuristic environment and voilà: *Starcraft*. We can't wait!!

excellent reputation Blizzard enjoy today. Then, of course, *Diablo* appeared on the scene with its gorgeous graphics and fantastic gameplay and Blizzard were suddenly one of the developers to watch.

We are now at the latest stage in Blizzard's development and I for one can't wait to get my hands on a playable copy of *Starcraft*. You see, although I quite enjoyed *Warcraft 1* and 2, I'd much rather play with spaceships and rockets than a group of Tolkienesque characters, which in some ways explains why I awarded comparatively low scores to both the *Warcraft* games.

I write this having had the privilege of sitting with the Blizzard chaps and watching them play through the first few stages of the game. Typically for a Blizzard title, it looks absolutely gorgeous. It also looks as though it will be just as addictive as *Diablo*, which I completed three times over a two-week period and will probably go back to again sometime soon. Try to imagine the incredibly crisp graphics of *Diablo* applied to highly detailed futuristic combat units and you'll get some idea of what to expect. Blizzard have taken onboard the few criticisms levelled at the two *Warcraft* games and have designed a brand new interface and gone to great lengths to make sure that *Starcraft* has more unit types than any game of this genre has





Of the three races in the game, the Terrans are the ones fans of real-time strategy games like *Red Alert* will be most comfortable with initially. This is because they don't look weird, they don't have weird names and they don't fight with weird machines. Which is more than can be said for the Zergs...

ever seen. *Starcraft* also has a very strong on-going storyline. This is something that Blizzard introduced to the real-time strategy genre with *Warcraft 2* and the trend looks set to continue with their latest project.

So it seems that Blizzard are about to repeat the success of *Warcraft 2* and *Diablo* and further cement their reputation as a leading force in games development. I spoke to Bill Roper, the games' producer, who is understandably very excited about Blizzard's biggest project to date.

PCZ: *Warcraft 2* was quite easy until very late in the game. Will *Starcraft* present more of a challenge?

Bill Roper: We have three campaigns in *Starcraft*. The first one will be very easy to get into and will introduce people to the interface and give them a feel for playing the game. This is for those who aren't used to playing strategy games and it acts as an introduction to the basic concept of *Starcraft*. However, from the second campaign onwards, the game will more or less assume that the player knows what he's doing and adjust the difficulty level accordingly.

PCZ: We've seen countless C&C and *Warcraft* clones over the last year, but Blizzard and Westwood are still miles ahead of the competition in terms of sales and critical acclaim. What's your secret?

Bill Roper: With *Warcraft*, I think the fact that we used the fantasy scenario has made a big difference. Everyone else

seems to sit down and think "let's make a game with tanks and guns", so all their games tend to be a bit similar. We're always out to do things differently at Blizzard and I think that shows in our games. This policy will obviously continue with *Starcraft*. Rather than make our own version of someone else's game, we want to produce something original that will provide a unique experience for the player. I mean let's face it, if a gamer wants to play C&C, he plays C&C, he's not interested in playing a second-rate C&C clone. I think we're similar to Westwood in that we're always trying to do something innovative that sets the pace rather than build on something that's already there.

PCZ: After the incredible success of *Warcraft 2*, do you think there's a ready-made audience for *Starcraft*?

Bill Roper: Hopefully there will be people who will give *Starcraft* a whirl simply because they liked *Warcraft 2*. I think there's a much larger built-in audience for strategy games now anyway; hopefully our reputation will help too and people will trust us that *Starcraft* is going to be something special.

PCZ: What's happening on the multi-player front with *Starcraft*?

Bill Roper: The multi-player side of the game will be unique in that people will be able to set the game up how they want. They can go into the game in the same way the game designers did and alter numerous variables and introduce handicaps for experienced players. The real goal behind this is



(Below) The units in *Starcraft* have a lot more character than those in *Warcraft 2*.



(Top left) The Blizzard HQ in LA is suitably posh and luxurious, er, well it is on the inside anyway. (Top right) Bill Roper is the man responsible for putting all the individual elements of *Starcraft* together.



that novice players will be able to compete fairly with others who've already spent a lot of time playing the game. You'll

be able to change each player's

rate of production, how many resources they're given, restrict access to more powerful units and stuff like that, so the multi-player game will be infinitely customisable.

PCZ: How is *Starcraft* structured? Do you just pick a side and play out a campaign as in most games of this type?

Bill Roper: No, there are three races in the game and each one has its own campaign. Each campaign concentrates on the part of the overall plot related to the race involved in that particular campaign. This will hopefully make for a non-linear game which branches out into three separate storylines while at the same time retaining a link from each one which gives the player the overall plot.

PCZ: Does this mean you will need to have different strategies

when playing each race?

Bill Roper: Most definitely. Each race obviously has its own units, weapons and characteristics. The Terrans for example, are modelled on traditional science-fiction characters. We wanted an almost classic set of units for the first campaign that would appeal to those who don't normally play real-time strategy games or for some


reason just never got into the whole science-fiction thing.

The last thing we want is for newcomers to feel overwhelmed at having to learn how to control and manage really weird machinery and weapons. To this end the Terrans have fighter pilots, big mechs, battleships and generally the kind of units you would expect from a human futuristic attack force. The Protoss campaign will introduce you to their very advanced technology. This obviously gives them the upper hand in many ways, although they won't be as physically strong as other races in the game. The Zergs, for their part, are an organic race. At the outset of the Zerg campaign you will control their hive, which is the centre of activity in their zone. The Zergs have eggs which constantly produce new units, so their big advantage lies in the fact that there are always lots of them running round the place at any one time.

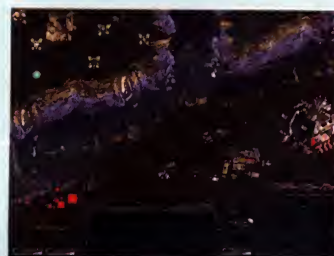
PCZ: Red Alert was massive. Will *Starcraft* be bigger?

Bill Roper: Well it would be nice (laughs). After *Warcraft 2* came out I promised myself I'd stop making predictions on sales figures. I thought *Warcraft 2* would do alright and sell maybe three or four hundred thousand copies and it sold 1.6 million, so I've decided I don't know what I'm talking about.

But there are also a lot of real-time strategy games out there and the genre's really opened up, so we've got to do something special. Hopefully, like *Warcraft*, there will be something about *Starcraft* that captures people's imaginations. I think *Starcraft* is very different to both *C&C* and *Warcraft* in concept, so in theory it should appeal to fans of both games, though whether this will translate into larger sales remains to be seen. Either way, we're all very excited about *Starcraft* and everything seems to be going as planned in terms of what we initially expected from the game when the idea was originally conceived, so we're quietly confident that when *Starcraft* is released it will be everything you could want from a real-time strategy game, and perhaps a little more.

PCZ: Thank you. 

(Above) This is a rendered bit which you obviously won't see in the actual game. It looks nice though all the same.



"I think *Starcraft* is very different to *C&C* and *Warcraft* in concept, so it should appeal to fans of both games."

Product details

Developer: Blizzard

Publisher: Sierra

Website: www.sierra.com

Release date: November

BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN



Steve Hill walks in shadow, sleeps all day and lives in a crypt. He might as well have a look at this vampire game then. The tit.



(Above left) That'll learn you, Peasant. (Above) Sinister happenings at the Pillars Of Nosgoth. (Right) Kain inadvertently stumbles across an oversized 50 pence piece. Clumsy fool.



Product details

Developer: Crystal Dynamics

Publisher: Activision

Website: <http://www.activision.com>

Release date: Autumn



RADITIONALLY THE DOMAIN OF GOBLIN-fixated freaks, role-playing games aren't immediately associated with consoles, a few notable exceptions withstanding.

Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain has recently broken the mould though, proving a massive hit on the PlayStation and offering a welcome respite indeed from the platform's more visceral fare. But the trusty PC still remains the natural habitat of the RPG, and a swift conversion was pretty much inevitable.

Thankfully, *Legacy Of Kain* is pretty much a goblin-free zone, revolving as it does around the exploits of the titular blood-sucking nobleman. Struck down in his prime by a gang of ruthless brigands, Kain awakes in the bowels of hell to be confronted by the necromancer Mortanius. Desperate to reap vengeance, he decides to strike a diabolical bargain – you know how it is, you've had a few pints and the next thing you know you're doing deals with necromancers – unwittingly becoming one of the undead. Although no relation to Kain out of *Kung Fu*, he does have one thing in common with his namesake in that he is destined to walk the Earth, despite the fact he's more intent on satisfying his newly realised bloodlust than spouting proverbs and balancing on logs.

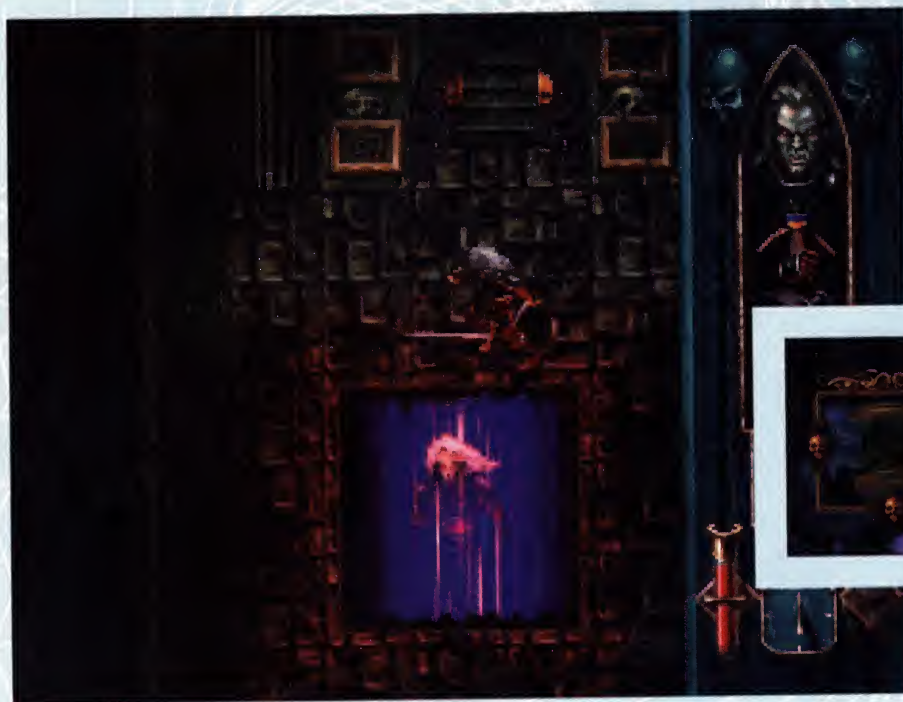
Where's your tool?

Having slaughtered his attackers, Kain is duly informed that his troubles have only just begun and that he must embark on a mammoth quest if he is to ever escape the living hell of vampirism. So it's his task to trawl the sprawling hinterlands of the borough of Nosgoth in search of mystical artefacts. As well as providing an amusing anagram of 'No Goths' (rule number one in any well-ordered society), Nosgoth is a fairly unwelcoming place, with potential death lurking around every dank corner. Fortunately, Kain is fairly handy and has an array of weapons and armour at his disposal. These include the Flame Sword, the twin axes of Havoc and Malice, and the nifty Chaos Armour, although a couple of pool balls in a sock would probably have the same effect.

Skirmishes come thick and fast, a useful side-effect being that once Kain has fatally wounded an opponent he can suck the blood from their soon-to-be-dead bodies, in this way maintaining his vampiric 'unlife'. Now convention dictates that this particular act of sanguineous slurping is carried out by introducing a set of sharpened canines to the jugular of the unwitting donor. Not good enough for Kain though, who has a cunning method of ▶



"Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough."



transfusion whereby the blood arcs from the victim's neck into his open mouth, preventing any unnecessary bending over, or touching or kissing of men. Undoubtedly a highly impressive trick, and something that the Hammer budget never stretched to.

Sound as a vampire pound

However, other vampire rules do apply: Kain becomes noticeably weaker in sunlight as well as balking at the slightest hint of water, much like RPG fans in fact. In line with more accomplished vampires (and that woman out of *Space 1999* in particular), Kain also has the ability to change his form. Apart from roaming around in his fancy nobleman's get-up, he can also slip into a wolf (not literally, that would be hideous), which comes in handy for travelling long distances. Naturally a bat is also served up on the menu, as is the option to transform into mist – which is undeniably useful for bypassing locked doors, but a bit of nightmare at social occasions.

Of course, any RPG worth its salt simply has to feature a shedload of spells, and *Blood Omen* shouldn't disappoint. Among the available magic is Mind Control as well as the ability to inspire hate, forcing enemies to tear through each other. There are also special objects such as the Heart Of Darkness (great name for a game), which restores strength, and the Putresce, a useful tool that reduces enemies into puddles of noxious slime. As for the enemies, there's a multitude of them, comprising over 100 different types, including eight boss characters.

There's a strong narrative theme to accompany the game,

(Above) Kain has a look around his crypt. (Above centre) What dark secrets does this pillar hide? No idea. (Above right) A zoomed-out view of The Pillars Of Nosgoth.



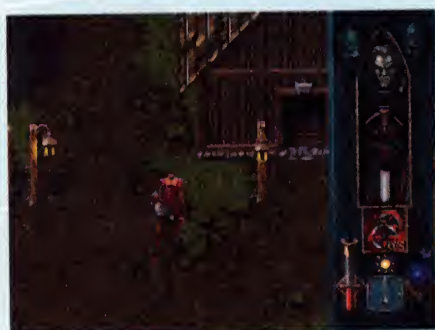
and there are promises of a professional voice-over. What this usually means is that a few drama students have been roped in to shamelessly ham it up, and this appears to be the case, with some ponce rolling his 'R's over such clumsy alliteration as

"R-r-r-ipping r-r-ragged flesh from bloodstained bone". The music and sound effects seem to be passable though, with the clanking of swords complemented by all the shrieks and whelps anyone could reasonably expect.

Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain promises to be one of the largest RPGs ever produced, packed full of secrets and offering over a hundred hours of gameplay, which should be enough to satisfy all but the most chronic of insomniacs. **Z**

The Dark Diary

As games go, *Legacy Of Kain* takes itself fairly seriously – there are very few laughs in evidence, unless of course you find the butchering of defenceless women amusing. It goes for the sinister, atmospheric approach, setting the scene with an intro that bears an uncanny similarity to that of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Francis Coppola's supposedly definitive vampire film that rapidly disappeared up its own arse, deteriorating into interminable tedium and comedy accents. The FMV doesn't end there though, and the finished game will feature almost 30 minutes of footage, the action interspersed with short clips that provide plot development. These clips are then stored in the so-called 'Dark Diary', providing a cinematic history of Kain's encounters. As well as being a useful reminder of exactly what it is that you're supposed to be doing, it effectively means that by the time you finish the game, your PC could be playing host to a short horror film which you can then sit back and watch at your leisure (assuming your video's broken).



(Above) Kain casually sucks the blood of an innocent passer-by. (Above right) Kain prepares to slay a fairly unconvincing skellington.

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SHADOW WARRIOR



(Left) What happened next? Burn baby, burn – chick warriors on fire. Two cylinders of propane. A large brick wall. One guess.

From the creators of *Duke Nukem* comes the rather marvellous *Shadow Warrior*, complete with farting Sumo characters and all manner of monsties that leave David McCandless shaken and delightfully stirred.

7 T WAS THE MOST TEDIOUS DEBATE OF last year. Bloody Duke versus bleeding Quake. "Duke rocks!" one side thundered, followed by a resounding "Quake sucks."

Then the other half came back: "No, Duke sucks," they said. "Quake rocks!" Never have so many talked such utter crap for so long about so little.

The fact was that both games rocked and both games sucked. *Nukem* had all the ideas, the character, the humour, and the real world locales, except it was shackled by a good but somewhat 'primary school' engine. *Quake* was both brown and repetitive, but it sported the best 3D front end on the planet – and in deathmatch, it was head, shoulders, torso and genitals above anything then or since.

In a monumental turnaround, 3D Realms recently licensed the *Quake* technology for *Duke Nukem Forever*, the next game in the series. But before they go down that texture-mapped pathway, they have managed to squeeze out *Shadow Warrior* which, what with its shagging bunnies, Lara Croft-a-like, forklift truck driving and healthy range of quips and 'humor', has to count as one of the most entertaining and playable demos to have featured on last month's cover shiny silver UFO.

If you played the demo, you probably thought, "Hmmm, this is like, *Duke* in a kimono," or perhaps something equally witty. There

isn't much more to explain, other than that the registered version will naturally contain the obligatory a) extra weapons, b) extra episodes, c) extra set pieces, and d) extra bad guys.

"By the time it's done, you're probably going to have the same, if not more, interactivity than *Duke*. There's going to be a lot to play with," promises George Broussard of 3D Realms. The idea with *Shadow Warrior* was obviously to build on their vast success with *Nukem*. "It's hard to follow up *Duke*, but I

"By the time it's done, you're probably going to have the same, if not more, interactivity than Duke."

think we'll get pretty close." Indeed, I believe they will.

Weapons-wise, the full version sports three spanking new weapons. First is the rail gun, a most impressive magnetic piece of hardware which spits chunks of metal at near light speed, penetrating (in the non-legal, death-causing kind of way) enemies. After that is the highly cool Guardian Head, which is only obtainable when you dispatch a certain monster in a certain way. You stick your fingers in the back of its decapitated skull in bowling ball fashion, and each



(Above) The railgun in action. Super-heated rings of metal on flesh. (Above right) In my hand I hold a fresh Ripper heart – it's amazing what you can find lurking around the Sainsbury's fresh meat counter.



(Left) Why look, it's the Guardian's head being used on a tough guy and a chick warrior. This could only happen in *Shadow Warrior*.

twitch of your digits initiates a different attack: circling fireballs, flame stream and exploding napalm. The final, ultimate weapon though, is the Ripper Heart, extractable only from a live Ripper which is an unfriendly ape-like creation. Squeezing the freshly culled heart will have a strange and devastating attack on your foes. No, really.

On the monster front, the registered version comes with six or seven new 'baddies'. Swelling the ranks of the ninja army are the Orange ninjas which shoot heat-seeking rockets, and the Gray Ninjas who lob accurate and annoying grenades in your direction. You also get a smattering of baby Rippers (faster and hungrier than their parents) and ten-foot tall Guardians, who will either fire fireballs out of their eyes or slice you into croutons with their swords. There's a bit of Skeleton Priest action too, as well as the Chick Warrior, a feral female armed with crossbow and explosive-tipped bolts. Yikes.

One of the end bosses is a huge farting Sumo wrestler. "They let these green noxious clouds out and then do these massive handclaps, disorientating you," says Broussard. He is, we will concede, rather amusing (the Sumo, not Broussard – although George is, of course, a 'funny guy'... Er, okay? Good.).

Capture the flag? Yus!

There are going to be between "24 and 28" maps in the final game, plus several deathmatch-only maps. "We are doing capture the flag and it's the best CTF I've seen. We'll probably do three or four of those levels and some extra vehicle maps.

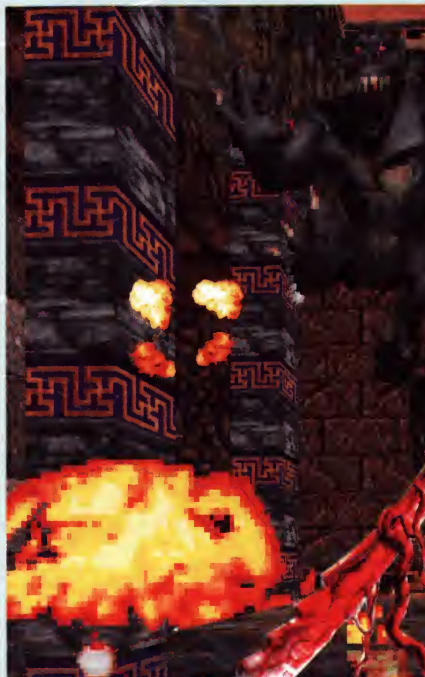
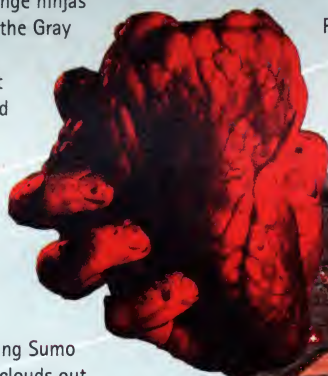
We'll have tanks you can fight in."

One level we had a look at had the hapless Lo Wing stuck on a boat as it took an automated path around the level soaked with grenade-throwing bad guys. If you manage to survive that onslaught, a whirlpool appears and sucks not only the boat, but also you and any bad



guys who happen to be nearby down with it. "You can be sucked up in it, spun around, and damaged. It's a good example of all the neat effects in it we just couldn't fit into the shareware."

All in all, if the demo's anything to go by, *Shadow Warrior* should end up on a par with *Nukem*. And if nothing else, give thanks to the good lord Jesus that 3D Realms have snaffled up the *Quake* engine. They should do some great stuff with it, and hey! – maybe it will finally and forever lay to rest Duke sucks, *Quake* rocks, *Duke* rocks, *Quake* sucks. (*Quake* rocks! – Ed). *Duke* sucks. 7



Product details

Developer: 3D Realms

Publisher: EIDOS

Website: www.3drealms.com/

Release date: September



One of the noxious, farting Sumo characters. He ain't pretty, and just wait until you see him in colour.

(Bottom) He says "Nagasaki" when a nuclear bomb goes off. There's a lot of Pearl Harbour references. I don't think people will be offended either way.





JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES 2

LucasArts are now putting the finishing touches to *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2*. Jeremy Wells finally got his hand on some code. We won't even begin to tell you what he was doing with the other one.

A

LOOK AT SOME VERY EARLY code and a chat with the team some months ago had already indicated that Jedi was going to be a very special game indeed. The engine that the team had developed was unlike anything we'd seen in a game of this type and could seemingly handle a high count of multi-polygon characters, water, dynamic lighting and gravity effects with consummate ease.

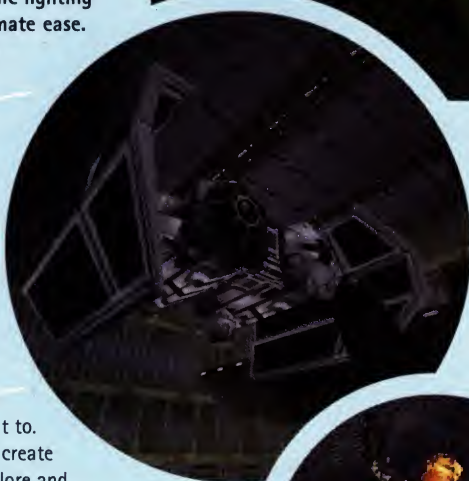
The aim was always to produce a 'living' environment that would deliver a damn good kicking to the likes of *Quake*, *Unreal* and anything that the 3DRealms bunch could muster, while at the same time making it as versatile as possible and easy for level designers to use.

"We wanted to be able to say to the level designers, this is your world, go and create the best levels you can," maintains project leader Justin Chin. "This engine can pretty much do anything we want it to. There's nothing else like it. We can create massive levels for the player to explore and build, with multiple levels, slopes and wide open spaces – it's just awesome. It's this technology that will keep LucasArts at the forefront of game design. This is the beginning of a new era for us."

Of course, such graphical lushness comes at a price, and although the levels we saw had all the elements in place, things were chugging along in only a half-screen window on a Pentium 120, although this was largely down to the sound cutting in and slowing everything down – a problem that LucasArts are confident they can easily fix when everything's finally been pulled together. This is very early code remember, and as such all the debugging shit is still in there, and it's slowing everything down massively. Once all the objects and textures have been sorted, they'll start working on the frame rate, and providing your machine can handle the rigours of Windows 95, your *Jedi Knight* won't limp along in jerko-vision in the standard-res modes. Depending on what view you're playing in, it will look as



Once they've amassed enough 'Force' points, players will be able to use the mighty light sabre to defend themselves against blaster shots.



good as either *Tomb Raider* or *Quake* in default resolutions.

And as you would expect, *Jedi Knight* is designed to take advantage of Direct3D and specific 3D accelerator cards, and extra frames of animation, translucent effects and an improved frame rate will transform it into something that's just as remarkable as *Tomb Raider* running under 3Dfx and Open GL *Quake*.

A Knight to remember

It almost goes without saying that some of the levels have to be seen to be believed. When you switch to the third-person view you really get a sense of the scale and enormity of some of the levels, especially when you venture outside. Picture the scene: you're being pursued by a horde of Stormtroopers and while dashing down a corridor, you spot a doorway leading outside. As you dodge laser blasts, you use your Jedi powers to make the long leap through the opening to safety. Outside the door you spot a speeder bike. Normally in a game of this type you'd run over to it, realise that it was part of the furniture, let off a few rounds to see if it had any effect, and then leg

"Jedi sports characters that are so well animated, they make the Marine in *Quake* seem like a Lego man."

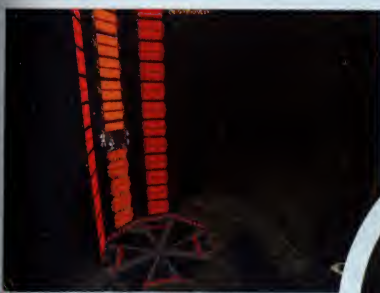
Product details

Developer: LucasArts

Publisher: LucasArts/VE

Website: www.lucasarts.com

Release date: September

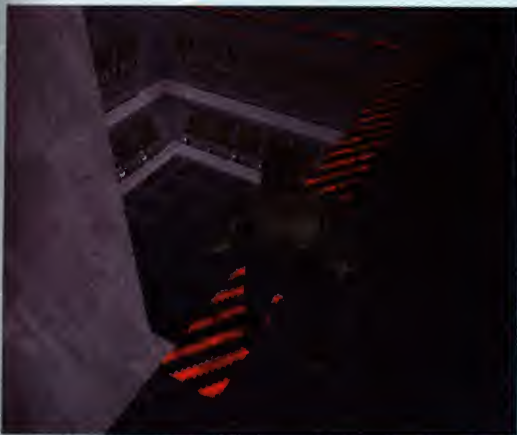


If you've got a 3D accelerator card in your machine, then you're in for a bit of a graphical treat.



it. But this is *Jedi Knight*. It's all about operating within a realistic environment that you can interact with. Remember that rogue laser blasts knock chunks out of walls. It's a speeder bike, you're being chased – what would Luke do? Exactly. You climb aboard the bike and make your getaway, leaving the Stormtroopers in a blaze of blaster fire. As you speed off into the distance, you find yourself under much stronger laser fire. Where the shit did that come from? Then you hear *that* noise. You feel the hairs on the back of your neck rise. You're being chased through a ravine at what seems like a zillion miles an hour by a TIE Fighter. Shit. Time to ditch the bike and take cover. You can expect this sort of intensity when you play *Jedi Knight*. It's that kind of game.

Not only does it boast a level of complexity that other developers have only ever dreamt about, but *Jedi* also sports characters that are so well animated, they make the Marine in *Quake* seem like a Lego man. The lead character Kyle, doesn't just walk, he slinks about the levels like a cat. Let



The multi-player levels should allow for plenty of hide and seek, stalk and snipe opportunities.

go of the mouse and you can watch him breath and look around. You actually find yourself using the third-person view just so you can watch him move, and even when you come under fire, it might be more appropriate to switch to the more conventional first-person viewpoint. Just like *Mario64*, it's a game that's almost as good to watch as it is to play.

Thankfully, the control system doesn't disappoint either. Kyle has got plenty of moves and animations ready up his sleeve and the keyboard/mouse combo that LucasArts have developed works surprisingly well, especially if you're used to the W/A/S/D/Space-plus-mouse configuration favoured by so many *Quake* players. Making Kyle leap, thrust and parry soon becomes second nature and with a bit of practice players should be able to engage in some pretty intense melee sessions with other Jedi wielding mighty light sabres. Particularly dextrous players will even be able to use it to defend themselves from blaster shots, which is a very important consideration indeed, because the light sabre is supposed to be the most powerful weapon in the *Jedi Knight* universe. If it was overly difficult and cumbersome to use, the whole Force thing would evaporate into sheer nonsense. Chin is understandably pleased with this particular aspect: "We just went with what we felt worked best. We've all played *Quake* and the keyboard/mouse combination was obviously the way to go. Kyle's a complex character with lots of moves. We had to keep it simple and instinctive for the player, but at the same time make it versatile. If you can't get on with it, we are working on a joystick system which is pretty neat [motions holding a light sabre and then picks up a ThrustMaster flight stick that's sitting on his desk] which will hopefully work just as well."

Nearly there...

There are a lot of 3D *Quake*-athon games scheduled for release in the next few months, what with *Hexen 2*, *Quake 2*, *Daikatana*, *Half Life* and *Unreal* all due out before Christmas. However, from what we've seen so far, *Jedi* will be up there battling it out with the best of them for the top spot. And with the all-conquering *Star Wars* licence stamped all over it, how can it possibly fail? **Z**



The levels in *Jedi* are much bigger than in *Dark Forces* and as a result there's a much greater sense of size and scale, more akin to *Tomb Raider*.



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LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY



Paul Mallinson's been waiting four long years for the second instalment in the *Lands Of Lore* series, and yet it's still not finished. Crikey.

F

OUR BLOOMIN' YEARS WE'VE WAITED for this, and at last, *Lands Of Lore 2* (or *Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny*, to give it its official title) has arrived in playable form. Having teased us with countless pre-release pre-rendered images, Westwood seem to have finally gotten themselves sufficiently together to pull together *Guardians Of Destiny's* numerous constituent parts into something resembling a playable game. And it has to be said that it's looking pretty good.

It's rumoured that the design of *Guardians Of Destiny* changed direction on a number of occasions during its lengthy development, which some people seem to think may have balled up the whole game. These people (whoever the hell they are) have yet to get their hands on a working version of the game, so they're in no position to judge. We, however, have a version here – that we're playing NOW – and are in a position to judge. Well, sort of. *Guardians Of Destiny* is almost

The sentries standing on this big, inflammable pool of oil will walk their beat no more...



(Above) A particularly gruesome scene from *Guardians Of Destiny*. No one ever said this was gonna be for wusses!



finished. There are a few more bits to bolt on, after which we'll be able to review it in its entirety. Bummer. Until then though, we'll have to make do with these first impressions.

Praise the Lore

On the surface, *Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny* looks like any other ultra-chic role-playing game, if there could ever be such a thing. It's got a first-person perspective view, it's got inventories, it's got spellcasting – it's got the lot. Underneath this familiar veneer though, rides an intriguing mixture of fantastical storytelling, hippy-trippy imagery (brightly coloured – the type Westwood do best) and devious puzzling. We can tell that already, as we've taken Luther (that's you, in the game) through the best part of three levels in the pre-release version we were boasting about earlier.

It's already clear how much effort the *LOL2* team have put into this game. For starters, the control system is already fully implemented and is working like a dream. There's no mucking around with endless menus and convoluted spell-casting systems, as all this has been trimmed to the bare essentials and tucked away in a handy pop-up window at the side of the screen. So Westwood have nothing to worry about on that front.

And there's the 3D engine. It could have been shit (after all, there's a lot of 'em around), but it stands up well against the opposition. It's not *Quake*... but it's not *Isle Of The Dead* either. And if you've ever played *Isle Of The Dead* and then rushed out to buy *Guardians Of Destiny*, you wouldn't regret it. Where Westwood have been particularly clever though, is in mixing live action actors into the 'live' 3D world, which brings forth an air of 'next generation-ness'. It's a good one to show to your mates if you want to impress them.

On occasion the action does nip away to one of the many marvellously animated cut-scenes, but on the whole we found the gameplay to be pretty much seamless.

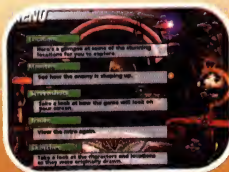
Hurrah!

So far then, *LOL2* plays like a dream and has bloody good graphics. But what about that all-important storyline? Well, we gotta admit that it's not bad at all – some guff about the gods falling out, an evil sorceress bearing a son afflicted with a terrible shape-changing disability (you being that son) – and other unusual stuff which all combines to make quite a nice little intro to the game.

When most of you (at least the intelligent ones) do get the opportunity to step into Luther's shoes, the first thing you'll notice about this 'terrible' shape-changing ability is that it will more often than not help you out during crucial



See more on our CD



If you've got the CD issue of *PC Zone* and want to find out what all the fuss is about, then hail ye, rejoice! – 'cos you can see a whole load more

of *Lands Of Lore: Guardians Of Destiny* in our interactive preview on this month's cover disc. Oh, and you'll need Windows 95 as well.

◀ moments in the game. When there's something big blocking the way, be it a boulder or a scary, prolapsed monster, you'll turn into a big, hulking beast with a back like a baboon's arse and claws that are handy for killing things. If in human form you're too big to make further progress, your character will miraculously metamorphose into a small, fast, vulnerable lizard, which helps keep the whole thing moving along at an easy-to-play, addictive pace. At first, the player will have no control over this attribute, but as the game progresses and the story of Luther's being is accounted for, the restrictions are eased and the player can shape-shift about to their heart's content, opening the whole game right up.

Patience, patience

Considering this is a preview and not a review, we're doing little to hide our enthusiasm for *Guardians Of Destiny*, but the best thing of all about this game (heh heh) – something that is attributable to everyone working on the project – is the atmosphere they've created. Westwood's sound guys really know what they're doing and it shows, from the sweeping orchestral soundtrack to the eerie 3D sound effects, which will fill you with terror whenever you're exploring. And this is not the luridly bright adventure its predecessor was – the real-time lighting effects see to that – which also scores bonus points on the *PC Zone* atmosphere-o-meter.

So, as you can no doubt tell, we're pretty happy with Westwood's progress on *Guardians Of Destiny*. The final game is currently being crammed onto four CDs, so it promises to be something of an epic. Now we can see why it's taken so long to put together.

Come on everyone, relax, wait for them to finish *LOL2* and enjoy the anticipation while it lasts. After all, Westwood can't mess things up now... can they? **Z**



(Above) Don't go licking anything.
(Above right) Tarzan's house.
(Right) Not for arachnaphobics!



(Top) Spider baby. (Middle) Yeah, we played this bit – push those pillars to one side and the rocks fall down on the baddies. (Above) This guy's had his Ready Brek.



Product details

Developer: Westwood Studios

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Website: <http://www.westwood.com>

Release date: October

Ancient scribbblings

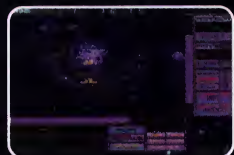
Westwood Studios employ some of the hottest computer artists in the world and are famed for their fabulously-coloured visuals. Before anything is created digitally, they go through 50 boxes of 2B pencils and 600 A2 sketchpads* roughing out their ideas onto paper – and some of these are pretty smart too, not to mention four years old. To ensure that these masterpieces are not lost in the mists of time, allow us to present a selection of pre-production scribbblings from *Guardians Of Destiny*.

* Information incorrect at time of going to press.





IF YOUR
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ATMOSPHERE...



• DISCOVERY •



• ACTION •



• DIPLOMACY •



• STRATEGY •



• WAR •

KING'S QUEST 8: MASK OF ETERNITY

Great adventure games never die, they simply turn into breathtakingly sumptuous 3D extravaganzas, says

Chris Anderson

ADVENTURE GAMES AS WE USED TO KNOW them have all but disappeared without trace. The traditional point-and-click puzzler has been knocked sideways with the arrival of 3D classics like *Tomb Raider* and, er, the forthcoming *Tomb Raider 2* (cough). Sierra are very quick to acknowledge this. In fact, top Sierra bod Ken Williams has publicly admitted that people don't want point-and-click adventures anymore, they want *Tomb Raider*, they want *Quake*, they want games in which you blow things up and where the most taxing puzzling element you'll come across is activating a switch by shooting at it with an enormous gun. Hence Sierra's complete change in approach to the latest episode in their long-running *King's Quest* series.

The 'cutesy' element inherent in the series so far which has charmed some, and reduced others to lengthy puke-orama sessions, has more or less disappeared completely. The new lead character (Connor) is a far more believable hero and his approach to puzzle-solving is to 'get physical' with his environment by twonking things with the various weapons at his disposal in order to trigger events elsewhere. It's not entirely dissimilar to the *Zelda* games on Super Nintendo, except obviously in glorious 3D. In fact, I've seen the gorgeous-looking 3Dfx version running and it looks even better than *Zelda* on the Nintendo 64.

Zelda who?

If you're finding all this a little confusing, a more familiar point of reference will probably be Sierra's own *Quest For Glory* series. *QFG* is basically an adventure game with RPG elements. As you progress through



(Above) The monsters in the game are big. Very big in fact. (Left) Yegads, a beast made of ice. He needs a jolly good hiding methinks.

the game your strength increases in proportion to the number of enemies you've nobbled, your intelligence increases as you cast spells, your dexterity increases as you continuously jump out of the way when confronted with a particularly troublesome enemy, and so on. This mishmash of adventure and RPG elements works up to a point, though it has to be said that the engrossing adventure game struggles to make up for the so-so throwaway RPG elements.

KQ8 for its part is an action-based adventure game with minor RPG elements. I've got to say at this point that I had this game presented to me when I visited Sierra in Seattle. Roberta Williams was there. If you don't know who Roberta Williams is you've either never played a Sierra adventure game in your life, or you've just been born.

Roberta wrote most of the *King's Quest* games. She's the one responsible for the masterful storytelling evident in every game in the series, and indeed she's working on the adventure side of *KQ8*.

Unfortunately, I put my foot in it by immediately blurting out "*Quest For Glory*" as soon as I saw *KQ8*. "Do you think so?" Roberta said, looking very alarmed. Well actually I do think so, and in my opinion any title with the gameplay of *QFG*, a storyline straight from the pen of Roberta Williams, and incredible 3D graphics tarted up with 3Dfx has got to be on just about every PC gamer's wish-list. You can be sure I'll be keeping a very close eye on this one. Expect an update on the project in the next issue of *Zone*. **Z**

Didn't I see you in *Wing Commander 4*?



(Above) The world of Daventry never looked so good.



Product details

Developer: Sierra

Publisher: Sierra

Website: www.sierra.com

Release date: TBA

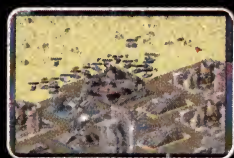


GO GET ANOTHER.

IMPERIUM GALACTICA



• DISCOVERY •



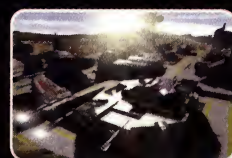
• ACTION •



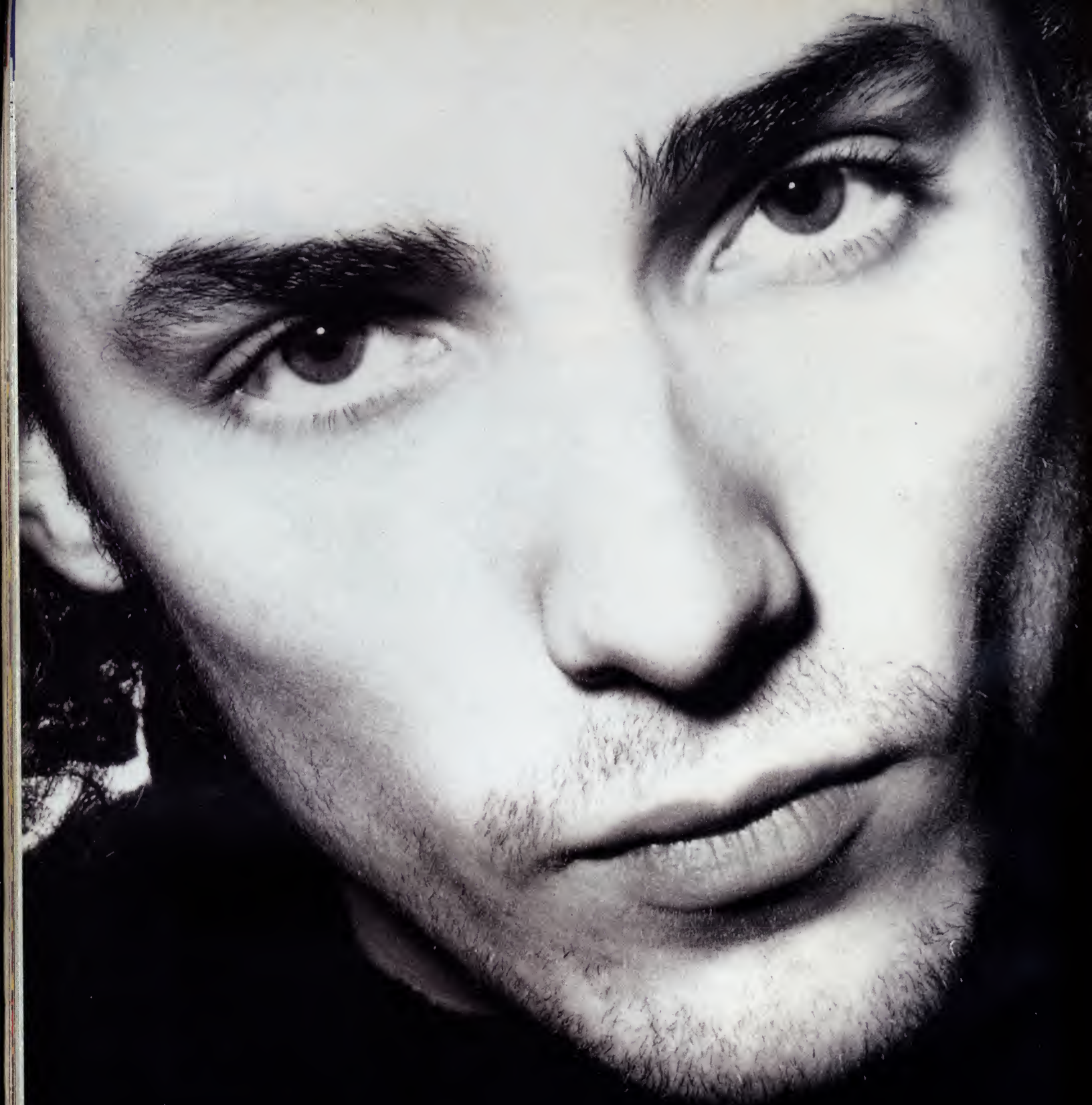
• DIPLOMACY •



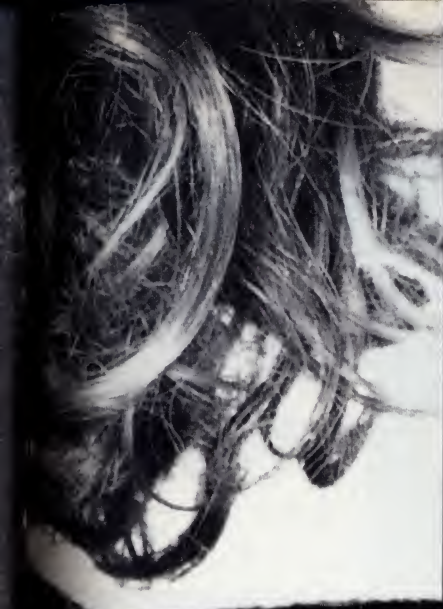
• STRATEGY •



• WAR •



**During the day Rob delivers small packages
via motorcycle. In the evenings he delivers a
devastating payload via twin Pratt and Whitney
F119-PW-100 turbofans**

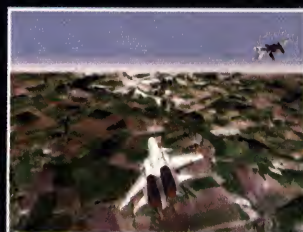


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- CGW (June)



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Review ZONE



To be quite honest, we were a bit dubious about the eventual arrival of *Dungeon Keeper*. We need not have worried. Peter Molyneux has done it again and produced another landmark game for the PC – see Charlie Brooker's definitive review for the full low-down.

In Perspective

This is designed to be a purely visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

Game 2

Cool games

We see literally hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing far more important stuff...

Atomic Bomberman
Carmageddon
Dungeon Keeper
Pete Sampras Tennis 97
Quake

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and yet you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Axelator
Theatre Of Pain
Speedster
Wargods
Banzai Bugs

Scoring system

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
21-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

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Nitro Racers	100
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Star Command	101
Uncle Henry's Mindblower	101



Thanks this issue to

- Lidia Stojanovic @ EIDOS
- John Romero and all @ Ion Storm
- Howard Glover @ Sierra
- Richard Eddy @ Codemasters
- AOL
- Peter Molyneux
- Simi Belo @ Electronic Arts

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Awards



90+ CLASSIC

The highest accolade a game can attain. It's innovative, extremely playable and has masses of long-term appeal. If you're going to buy a game this month, it should be this.



80-89 RECOMMENDED

An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something to make it a gaming classic. Well worth checking out, especially if you're a big fan of the genre.



20 and below PANTS

Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. Do not buy this game, it will ruin your life and all those who come into contact with you. Got it? Have we made ourselves clear?

Looking back

Summertime boom!

WHEN WE FIRST started to put this issue together, we found ourselves in a bit of a panic. There was simply nothing out there to review. With the exception of a bit of a blip around Easter, the PC games market is generally focused on the

got their dates mixed up, or publishers have begun to realise that people do buy and play computer games throughout the year and not just at Christmas – because as you can see from this issue, there's quite a bit of stuff out there just now. There's *Dungeon Keeper* for starters, which Charlie

is completely addicted to – and it's an addiction that is so far proving highly infectious. Mallo's been sticking with *Comanche 3* and has consistently kicked Macca's arse at *Puzzle*



three months leading up to Christmas. You get the odd product that slips back and doesn't make it and is then pushed out in the spring (Take *Star Trek: Generations* for example, and of course, *Dungeon Keeper* which now holds the record for slippage, although there's still no sign of *Heart Of Darkness*). If it doesn't make Easter, then it's usually 'held over' until the next Christmas, which means that come the summer there's a scarcity of new games on the shelves. But this year sees a change in direction. Either the marketing people have

Bobble. Chris is still playing *X-COM 3* (of course) and an early version of the forthcoming *Age Of Empire* from (gulp) Microsoft which he's got very high hopes for. We've been having regular *Atomic Bomberman* tournaments in the office (and as predicted, Charlie isn't invincible) and Patrick has spent many an hour with *Pete Sampras Tennis* which he's now an expert at (well he's better than me, anyway). *Carnageddon* is still regularly booted up, and thanks to a rather nifty little patch we found on the Web, we can

still run down pensioners, bikini-clad beauties and American Football beefcakes instead of zombies.

No one could hide their disappointment with *Generations*, but having seen some very early code from *First Contact* (which uses the Unreal engine) there are high hopes for the next game. I spent a couple of hours with *Jedi* and played through some early levels of alpha code. The 3D engine is a massive step up from that used in *Dark Forces*, and if they can keep the frame rate up, I for one am confident that it will be a serious challenger for game of the year. Hopefully MicroProse will manage to do something equally impressive with their *Star Trek* licence.

Despite having both *Blood* and an early version of *Shadow Warrior* installed on our network, everyone still



with Jeremy Wells

insists on playing network *Quake*, and the *Scourge Of Armagon* levels are still the clear favourite. Macca and the CD production team are still whipping us all, so we've unofficially set up a two-tier system that consists of myself, Chris, Mallo and Spike (our freelance art bods) and we can now effectively wipe the floor with the *PC Pro* team upstairs with minimum effort.

As well as playing *Quake*, we've all been spending a fair bit of time on the *PC Zone* Website, answering queries and winding people up on the chat forum. If you haven't logged on already, then check it out. We'd love to hear from you. **Z**



ATI 3D
Native Version
Available



3DBLASTER
Native Version
Available



3DFX
Native Version
Available



DIAMOND STEALTH
Native Version
Available



MATROX MYSTIQUE
Native Version
Available



POWERVR
Native Version
Available



The software is designed to take advantage of **D3D**



The software is designed to take advantage of **MMX**



This software will only run under **WINDOWS 95**



The software may run slowly, especially in hi-res mode



The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTINPUT**



The software supports **MICROSOFT DIRECTPLAY**



The software supports **INTERNET PLAY**



The software will run acceptably on a **486DX2/66**

THE BENCHMARK PC

At *PC Zone* all games are played and tested on a **DAN Technology Pentium 133** with **16Mb RAM**, a **2Mb graphics card** and a **quad-speed CD-ROM drive**.





(Left) Dropping a warlock into the sacrificial pool.
(Above) A bunch of bile demons work out in the gym.

Dungeon Keeper

Deep, dark, complex and dangerous. That's a dungeon. Shallow, pale, backward and harmless. That's **Charlie Brooker**. Put them together and what have you got? Not "bibbety bobbety boo", that's for sure...

DUNGEON KEEPER REPRESENTS A TRIUMPH of creative endeavour over marketing muscle. A bunch of imbeciles in marketing wanted it released over a year ago, but Peter Molyneux and his team have stuck in there and carried on programming to ensure the game measures up to their own expectations. And now, finally, it's ready for release. *Dungeon Keeper*, the most anticipated game in Bullfrog's history, has reached the end of its notoriously prolonged gestation period. And it rules.

The underground movement

The game itself is a definite genre-buster. It's kind of like playing every Bullfrog game ever released, plus three or four new ones, all at once. In fact, it's an absolute *bastard* to describe. Trying to fit the game into an easy-to-comprehend pigeonhole is a bit like trying to stuff a live horse in your mouth – it just won't go. The best way to summarise it would be to imagine playing a three-dimensional hybrid of *Command & Conquer* and *SimCity 2000*, in which you can actually 'become' one of the little munchkins that run around your ever-evolving landscape. There are also obvious parallels with *Theme Park*, but then there are equally obvious parallels with *Populous*, *Archon* and *Ultima Underworld*, too. And as a multi-player game, it's a cross between all of these and *Spy Vs Spy* as well. It sounds complicated, and when you consider the sheer number of disparate elements at work here, it is – yet the underlying principles are simple enough that you



(Above) Confusing, no. Complex, yes. When you see *Dungeon Keeper* in action, it all makes perfect sense.

can pick up them after about 20 minutes play. To describe it as a masterpiece of game design is no exaggeration.

Here's the deal. You, mister player sir, are cast in the role of 'Dungeon Keeper' – that is, you're the evil overlord who runs the subterranean dens so often encountered in RPG titles. As the game opens you gaze out across a sickeningly green and pleasant province, a blissful utopia populated by contented peasants, ruled by benevolent, honourable Lords. Your task is to convert it into a land of dark, nightmarish brutality and unimaginable torment, over which you may rule mercilessly forever more. Each time you complete a level, that section of the map is transformed from lush green forestry to toxic eyesore. Digging underground tunnels in order to *destroy* the environment? Perhaps they should have called it 'All Hail The Anti-Swampy'.

Information overload

Attempting to explain all of *Dungeon Keeper's* elements in detail would be futile; we simply don't have the space. Check out the step-by-step walkthrough of level one (a tutorial



(Above) A monster's bedroom from a monster's point of view.
(Left) That's what Claire Rayner looks like with nothing on. Tee hee.



level) on the following page for a glimpse at the (very) basics. Your objective in each stage is basically the same: to defeat everyone and everything else. At some point in each level, the 'Lord of the Realm' will enter the playing area, intent on destroying your subterranean playpen. Defeat him (and any rival dungeoners while you're at it) and you can proceed to the next stage. And just in case you think that all sounds a little 'samey', here's a timely 'information belch' for you to consider. It's jam-packed with *Dungeon Keeper* statistics. See if you can swallow it all in one go...

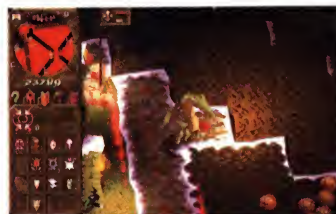
There are 13 different types of 'room' in the game (14 if you count bridges), each of which serves a totally unique strategic function. You can cast 16 different kinds of spell and plant six different varieties of booby-trap. There are four different makes of door to protect yourself with. Your dungeon may be populated by any combination of the 17 different available monsters, each of which has its own

Slave labour



The imps are my favourite creatures of all. They're your dogsbodies, your slave labour – the poor bastards who have to physically undertake your every command.

Perpetually digging for gold, dragging corpses to the graveyard, fixing traps or mending the walls, they've got a firm grasp on the shitty end of the stick career-wise. Just like your average fast-food eatery employee, they are helpless, downtrodden underlings who have no choice but to conform to your every whim – something which wouldn't be half as satisfying if their AI wasn't so spot on. Like all the monsters in *Dungeon Keeper*, they're so adept at route-finding, you don't even notice they're doing it. Superb stuff.



(Above) A big scaly dragon wearing white gloves and larging it on the dance floor. Massive.

Wee beasties

There are more visible signs of life in a single screenful of *Dungeon Keeper* than you'll find in most European nations (especially Belgium). When things are going well, the corridors are positively *infested* with creatures. Beetles scuttle this way and that, their tiny feet audibly tickling the cold stone floor. Bile demons grunt, break wind and haul their flabby, unpleasant hides through the earthen lair. Flies and dragons swoop through the dank air. You half expect the voice of David Attenborough to pop up on the soundtrack, explaining in a hushed and reverent tone the monsters' mating habits and dietary concerns.

Still, they may well fight the enemy on your behalf, but the creatures are hardly subservient. Fail to keep them paid and well-fed, for instance, and they'll begin to sulk, fight among themselves, vandalise your dungeon, go on strike – or even

start deserting in droves. Different creatures get upset by different things (the warlocks are particularly troublesome). As in life, keeping everyone happy is a major headache.



unique set of characteristics (right down to individual blood types), appropriate first-person viewpoint, and access to a range of spells (24 in total) entirely separate from those available to you yourself. During a given level, you could end up under assault from any number of rival *Dungeon Keepers* (and their hordes), or from any of the 13 different 'heroes' – humans who try to vanquish you – who may (if you've built a Torture Chamber) be 'converted' to your cause and command. Dead creatures may be eaten by others, or (if you have one)



The lighting effects are fantastic. And they wouldn't look out of place on *The Hitman And Her*.

Dungeon Keeper Walkthrough

Trying to describe *Dungeon Keeper* in words is a tad tricky, so here's a bijou walkthrough thing which takes you through the simplest of levels – namely stage one – in order to afford you a fleeting glimpse of the game dynamics. For added realism, cut these screenshots out, have them enlarged at a local print shop, then stick them on your monitor, one at a time, while holding the mouse in your hand and listening to *BBC Radiophonic Workshop, Death and Horror Sound Effects Volume Three*.



Yo, suck-knuckle, check it out. It's a virgin dungeon. There's nothing here yet except the all-important dungeon heart (watch out – should the enemy destroy this, it's 'game over' time), a handful of imps, and an empty room in the lower left-hand corner. Let's get digging – and where better to dig first than that enticing gold seam up in the top right?



I've highlighted the area I want my workers to concentrate on first. In a second they'll be along at my bidding and I can sit back and watch as they dig away like the lowly slaves they are. Looking on as they sweat their guts out gives you a warm glow inside. It's a bit like running a branch of McDonalds. Or one of Nike's production lines in East Asia. Or a dungeon. Doh.



There they go, hacking away at the gold as if their miserable lives depended on it. Should your minions work too slowly for your liking, simply right-click to give them a few hearty slaps with your disembodied hand. They work harder when they're scared of you – just be careful not to accidentally beat them to death (which is easier than you think).



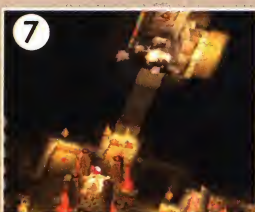
Ooh, look. Hidden behind that gold is a whole new area. Part of the beauty of *Dungeon Keeper* is the way you never know what's lurking behind the next chunk of earth – until you dig through it. This could have been a lava pit, a secret tunnel, a cache of power-ups, even an enemy dungeon. But it isn't. It's just a pool of water. Phew. How lovely.



Since the gold has now been successfully excavated, my imps can start to claim the area for my dungeon. A wisp of red smoke appears as each square comes under my control. Claimed areas have little red dots on them (to make matters easier, rival dungeon squares sport different colours), indicating land that I have full control over them (oh, the power!). I've decided to build on this area... so that's precisely what I'll do...



A few clicks later and I've converted that empty space into a Treasure Room. This is essential for storing gold. Come payday, every critter in my domain will be in here, sniffing for cash like a pack of hollow-cheeked junkies hanging round the needle exchange. Your minions require a regular money fix – fail to find the necessary funds to placate them and there'll be hell to pay.



I've decided to tempt some monsters in. That mist-shrouded doorway is a portal to the outside world through which beasties will enter. Certain facilities attract certain types of monster. Training rooms, for instance, tend to entice violent, brutal bastards, whereas more cerebral fiends (dragons or warlocks) tend to find research libraries altogether more beguiling.



A few minutes later and a fly and a beetle have arrived in my dungeon, lured away from their natural habitat. Here's the beetle now, heading toward the lair I've just constructed. The lair is essentially a dormitory, providing rest and relaxation for your minions. It's an area that's fraught with problems, for example, you don't want giant spiders sleeping next to giant flies for obvious reasons.



Next I've decided to build another essential area – the hatchery. After all, my creatures submit to hunger just like the rest of us and have appetites that need to be satiated. Should they feel in the mood for snacking on a bit of Chicken Tonight, this is the room they'll be visiting. You can also pick chickens up and feed your minions yourself, should you feel so inclined.



Things are ticking along nicely, so I've decided to control a fly for a few minutes. Just cast the 'Possess Creature' spell on any of your monsties and you're whisked into first-person view. Since I'm a fly, everything looks a little distorted. Not only do different organisms view the world in different ways – beetles look through a fish-eye lens, hellhounds are colour-blind – they also move in a different manner, too. Beetles crawl. Dogs lope. Flies, unsurprisingly, fly.



Uh-oh, trouble. Some sneaky bastard is attempting to break through my walls. See those little clouds of dust? That's a bunch of would-be heroes, banging away with their hammers and failing to make much impact on my fortified walls. It's only a matter of time before they breach my lair though, so I think I'd better start rounding up my forces pretty sharpish.



It's hard to see what's going on here, but it's a heck of a barney. Two little dwarves have broken into my treasure room, and I've dropped a load of angry beetles and flies on their heads in revenge. Hopelessly outnumbered, the shortarse intruders don't stand a chance. Heh. Heh heh heh. Heh. Hee haw. Ahem. Okay, so the evil laugh needs a bit of work. I'm only on level one, after all.



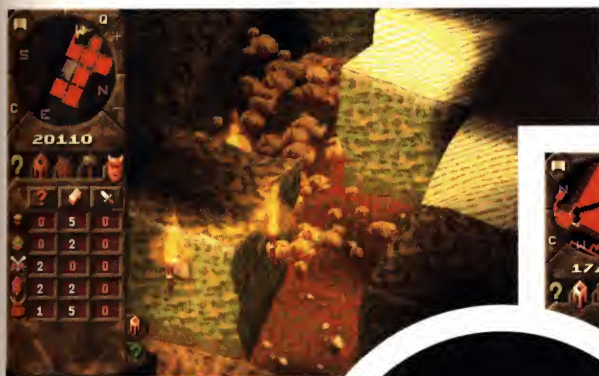
My murderous antics have alerted the Lord of the Realm – and here he comes right now, stomping towards my dungeon like a right smug, self-righteous tosser. Am I scared though? Nah – Esther Rantzen in plate armour, that's all he is, even if he doesn't have the same oversized great choppers. He must die. He must die. He must die. He must die. He must die. He must die. He must die.



Sure enough, Captain Bigshot looks like he's destined to meet a similar fate to that of those luckless dwarves. If the battle starts going badly, I suppose I could always possess one of the monsties and finish him off for once and for all myself. But the battle seems to be progressing quite nicely, so I won't. Instead I'll simply sit back, put my feet up and watch him buy the farm.



Victory is mine. The Lord lies sprawled across my dungeon floor like a carpet. A shiny, metallic carpet. Shaped like a man. Actually, he's not like a carpet at all, is he? Oh well. The important thing is this: I am the winner. I am King. And I am now proceeding to the next level. That's the basics dealt with – the game itself really starts kicking in around level five. By level nine, you'll be hopelessly, helplessly addicted...



(Left) Clouds of dust as the imps get digging.
(Below) The hatchery: a good place to pick up a few fine chicks.



dragged to the graveyard where they may rise as ghosts, skeletons or vampires. And last but not least, if you wish, you can play an entire level from the point of view of any one of your creatures, leaving the planning, building, wargaming and resource management side of things to the 'Computer Assistant' player (which mimics your personal playing 'style' as closely as possible). You want depth? It's right here, sunshine.

It's not bad at all

Sounds too much to cope with? Quit your fretting, you big wuss. The learning curve has been worked out quite brilliantly, with the first handful of stages being simplistic tutorials which ease you into the game with the minimum amount of bewilderment. By the time you reach level five – which is where the game really starts to open up – you'll be confidently thinking you're an expert. And how very wrong you'll be, because there's still absolutely loads to learn.

Dungeon Keeper is a game of continual discovery and hitherto unprecedented depth. Technically stunning, visually dazzling (although it does bitmap pretty badly when you get

up close), hopelessly addictive – need I continue any further? Nope. Didn't think so. Just don't thank the imbeciles in marketing. If they'd had their way, it would have been released over a year ago in an unfinished form. This kind of complex, balanced gameplay takes time to perfect. And it's well worth it. **Z**

More! More! More!

There's far more in *Dungeon Keeper* than in any other game you care to mention. Fact. Now, 'more stuff' doesn't always mean 'better', but here each element has been perfectly balanced. As in life, each individual element influences the others in some way. If you see what I mean. Er, anyway, here's a list of some of the other cool things in *Dungeon Keeper* which we didn't have space to crack on about...



- The graphics and sound effects – they're grrrrreat.
- It's a totally brilliant multi-player game too. And don't worry

if you don't have a network, or modem – or even any friends for that matter. You can play against the computer for endless, endless fun.

- The game has loads of downright spooky 'hidden features'. The team are intent on messing with your head, but I won't say any more lest I spoil the surprises to come. You have been warned.
- If you convert a hero to your cause, you can control him/her as well. So that's another 13 different 'creatures' you can play as.
- Some of the hidden levels require you to guide individual monsters to safety in first-person view. Raa. Fantastic.
- The music's great but, if you prefer, you can replace the game CD with an audio CD of your choosing, à la *Quake*. The team have listed their own recommendations in the back of the manual. Personally, I'd suggest *Down Down* by Status Quo. Or *Going Underground* by the Jam. Or anything with a 'subterranean' feel to it. Because I'm obvious and twee.

Yeah, but...

Hey, nothing's perfect. The sphinx even has a broken nose for god's sake, but tourists still gasp at it. Here are *Dungeon Keeper's* drawbacks in full...

1. The first-person sections – these are more functional than they are exciting. It's worth possessing a creature (particularly a level 10 warlock) if you want to help out during a scrap, but it certainly isn't as much fun as the general planning and strategy itself.
2. Hi-res mode looks groovy, but naturally it isn't as fast and fluid as low-res (where everything looks a tad muddy). Mind you, a 3D accelerator patch is promised for the near future (then again, when *isn't* it?).
3. It's actually quite hard to *lose* a game until you get to about level 12. Or maybe that's just because I'm utterly brilliant at it.
4. It's got orcs in it, so your girlfriend can quite legitimately call you a sad bastard for playing it.
5. Battles aren't conducted with much finesse, and it's generally a case of everyone just piling in. Consequently, they can be confusing to watch.

In Perspective

Dungeon Keeper has certain gameplay elements in common with more or less any game you care to mention – it's that eclectic. Still, for the sake of comparison, we'll line it up against some other classics and see how it compares...

Dungeon Keeper

C&C: Red Alert

Theme Hospital

Populous

SimCity 2000

X-COM3

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/66

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: The recommended spec is a mere P60, folks...



Score

The game that redefines definition.



Price: £34.99

Release date: July

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Website: <http://www.bullfrog.co.uk>

dan The People's Choice

Blood

Another 3D shoot 'em up using the *Duke Nukem* engine. But, muses **David McCandless**, can the haem-o-mungous registered version of *Blood* possibly be as sanguine-o-scopic as the shareware incarnation?



FOR THE UNINITIATED, BLOOD COULD BE described as a horror film version of Duke Nukem. The central character is Caleb, a gunfighter and high-flyer in the Cult Of Tchernobog ("The One That Binds", "The Devourer Of Souls" – you may have heard of him). Anyway, our Cal is suddenly and inextricably betrayed by his overlord and turned into some kind of semi-undead vengeance seeker. Thirty-six labyrinthine levels away, through a strange mix of Victorian architecture and modern day technology, stands his ex-boss/god, baiting him and waving his galactic willy rather provocatively. Caleb is incensed and, in a rather bad mood, stomps off to confront the puerile deity and all his minions.

As is the deal with most registered versions, the full *Blood* comes with three new episodes, a bunch of new weapons, and some new monsters to throw them at. If you've played the demo, you'll know that the first episode is a kinda cool, kinda weird journey through a strange alternate industrial revolution. A Victorian train station leads you onto a steam engine (a very cool moving level, incidentally) and then to a bizarre carnival. Beyond that, you should prepare to buckle your seatbelt for a journey into utter weirdness.

The second episode – Even Death May Die – is set in an icebound tundra. Icicles, frozen trees, glaciers – you know the drill. It starts off on a stranded boat, goes through an excellent meat factory, and then proceeds into a series of icy Hampton Court mazes. There are frozen swimming pools to fall into, numerous ice tunnels to explore and much farting about to be had around glaciers. Four or five snow levels lead you to a huge mine shaft and then a quick tumble into a scary spider's den.

Episode three goes for more of the 'real world' look of *Duke Nukem*. It takes place in a variety of blasted cityscapes, with rooms, sewers, and rooftops to get horribly eviscerated in. Dead Reckoning, the final episode, is just one long descent through huge fortresses and castles.

Naturally, each pico-centimetre of each corner of each level is packed chock-full with bad

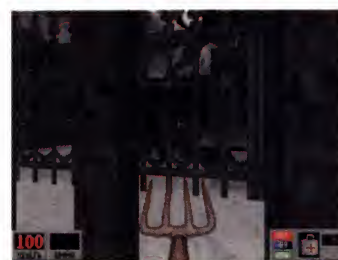


guys. Groaning zombies drag themselves out of the ground. Screaming tommy gun-wielding monks are all over the shop, backed up in the full version by hordes of new monsters. Poisonous spiders, bloated butchers (rather useless axe-throwing zombies who puke green slop at you), hell hounds (fire-breathing pooches, no less), phantasms (ghosts which aren't always solid) – plus a whole value-pack of end of episode bosses to dispatch.

To reduce these entities into ham, Caleb is equipped with the requisite range of hard-core ordinance. Bog-standard pitchfork is soon replaced with flare gun, which sets unlucky opponents ablaze. Shotgun (single- and double-barrelled) comes next, followed by an excellent auto-strafting tommy gun and some bundles of dynamite. In the full version, remote and proximity detonators can be attached to TNT for more creative gore fireworks. But then you stumble across the Incinerator and your life is complete. It's a napalm launcher which pretty much evaporates anything in its path. Or you could opt for the Voodoo Doll, a tasty little effigy which when politely stabbed has a tendency to murder anyone who happens to be in your line of sight. Or how about the aerosol can which, when fired through a zippo, creates a healthy ball of flame. Or you can use the Tesla Cannon, an excellent plasma gun or, maybe, just go for the Life Leech, a titanic energy weapon which draws the life out of your enemies. Choices, choices, choices.

T-cell-tastic

As the title so obviously implies, this game features a mass of wholesale blood-letting. Indefinable brain matter splattered across cobblestones? You got it. Heads exploding, geysers of ichor fountaining from neck stump? It's all yours. Deliberate human combustion with sizzling gristle, shattering bones and deep-fried eyeballs? No problemo whatsoever. Windpipes splintering like wicker, ribcages imploding, sheets of bubbling sputum and ham? Easy.



Level design is pretty consistent and packed full of distractions, though it does get a little samey later on.

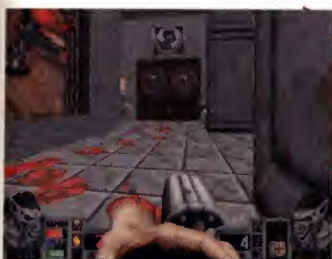
The monsters are relentless, the monks have cat-like reflexes, and some of the gargoyles are stupidly tough.



Sometimes a pitchfork just ain't enough to do the job. Thankfully there are plenty more effective weapons to choose from, all of which are mightily destructive.

This attention to detail spreads throughout the game. You'll see wall-posters of the Baby Jesus slowly warping into a demonic figurine. You can turn on pieces of machinery or explore bedside drawers or gutters for extra power-ups. Taking a dainty step sideways from *Duke Nukem's* sci-fi movie homages, *Blood* features nods, winks, and quotes taken whole from various horror movies. "Gonna need a bigger boat," says the Caleb character when he finds himself in a glacier flow (the best line in *Jaws*, fact fans). There's a secret room with 'Sloth' sprayed on the wall and each level is a veritable mishmash of Hammer House, *Kreuger* and zombie film references.

By far the most extraordinary feature of *Blood* has to be its sound effects. They are nothing short of incredible. "Manamax and spear books," the cultists shriek, alongside something not dissimilar to the word 'bollocks'. The zombies endlessly crow about "Brainssssss". Set a fanatic on fire and he screams like a girl: "It burns! Oh god it burns," before melting into a heap of steaming entrails accompanied by the appropriate popping and sizzling effects. The soundtrack too, is a constant wash of Gregorian chanting



and Gothic chamber music, all of which is beautifully recorded and highly atmospheric. Unfortunately, after playing the full version you get the impression that the designers crammed a lot of their best ideas into the shareware demo. The later levels all get a bit samey and lack some of the sparkle and nice touches of the first episode. You also get the impression that Monolith were trying too hard to create 'another *Duke Nukem*'. The Caleb character mumbles to himself in the same cod gravelly voice as Duke, laughs when gibs go flying, and lets forth the occasional one-liner. They may have used the same actor, but the delivery is worse and nor does it gel with the oh-so-serious 'Doctor, I open my bowels and this D&D stuff comes out' storyline (choice quote: "It distills his hate into the maelstrom raging in the centre of his mind"). Also, deathmatch – or rather BloodBath as it is here – is frankly disappointing. Too many stupidly huge weapons are on offer. Too many power-ups and add-ons dotted around the place. The players also run far too quickly, and the custom network levels are average. Most unimpressive to say the least.

Having said all that, *Blood* is damn enjoyable to play. Its engine and technology may smack you as being somewhat cheap and nasty in this post-*Quake* reality, but it does possess a certain charm and a certain smoothness which makes mouse and keyboard manoeuvres both effortless and enjoyable. It's very difficult too – the monsters are relentless, the monks have cat-like reflexes, and some of the gargoyles are stupidly tough. But it contains enough well-designed architecture, enough nice touches, enough secrets, and enough hardware to supply any Fragmaister with at least 20 hours of solid gameplay. **Z**



(Above left) As the name of the game suggests, things can get pretty bloody at times. (Left) If you can't find a way out then blow something up. (Above) The limits of the engine mean that it all looks a little flat.

In Perspective

Of course, none of the games that use the Build engine are comparable on a technical level to the mighty *Quake*, but they do all offer something a little different in terms of gameplay. When it comes to Deathmatch however, none of them can really compete with the mighty *Q*, despite some original quirks.

Blood

Redneck Rampage

Witchaven

Duke Nukem

Quake

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended under Windows 95)

Processor: P90

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick



Score

Not a classic, but enjoyable nevertheless.



Price: £44.99

Release date: Now

Publisher: EIDOS

Telephone: 0181 780 2222

Website: <http://www.monolith.com>

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Wargods

Nobody likes a good fight as much as Chris Anderson. Which is why we gave this to **Patrick McCarthy**.

Y

YOU DON'T EXPECT A GREAT DEAL OF realism from a beat 'em up. The average fight in the street does not take place between a six-armed demigod from the underworld and a large-breasted female

stormtrooper in a bikini and thigh-length zebra-skin boots (except in Coventry). And whereas the average beat 'em up scrap is a balletic affair, with beautiful combatants leaping through the stratosphere like gazelles with Ralgex on their genitals, a proper scrap is a writhing mass of ugliness, takes place on the floor, and looks like someone's emptied a 300lb bag of whale blubber onto a rotisserie. But a good beat 'em up, like Tekken 2 on the PSX, or Virtua Fighter on the PC, at least has a vague feeling of realism. Logical button combinations, varied fighting styles, and characters who move realistically thanks to decent animation.

Oh, dear...

Wargods, a straight conversion of Midway's less-than-impressive arcade game, isn't one of those. Instead, it's straight from the *Mortal Kombat/Killer Instinct* school, only in 3D. Which means you get the usual range of bizarre characters, and instead of a fight, you have teleporting and ludicrous projectile moves, such as attacking people with a horde of dancing skeletons, or throwing invisible petrol bombs to make them burst into flames. It's more like a circus-based, carpet-bombing campaign than one-to-one combat.



(Left) The latest facial depilatory treatment from Laboratoire Garnier, with active firezones.



...oh, dear...

You may feel a beat 'em up in which you don't even need to make physical contact with your opponent is the best of all possible worlds. Fair enough. But combined with the crap special effects are some of the worst animations around: one second you're crouching in your oh-so-sexy lingerie, the next you've got your thighs wrapped round someone's neck and your crotch in their face – and you don't know how you got there. This is many people's idea of a good night out. But it doesn't make a good beat 'em up.

...oh, dear

The characters are as absurd as ever, but include the obligatory 'sexy bird' – in this case, one who wears a G-string made of dental floss and leans back and shakes her tits when she wins. You can imagine the designers thinking this will really get us going... but they probably only had one hand free when they worked on it. So no plus-points there either. And that's it, really. Crap animation, ludicrous 'special moves' and tedious characters. Who could ask for more? **Z**

Beat 'em up versus a bundle

Just how true to life is the average beat 'em up? Simply check your favourite against real life in this easy-to-use chart.

	BEAT 'EM UP	REAL FIGHT
AVERAGE DURATION OF COMBAT	Anything up to three weeks	23 seconds
TYPICAL COMBATANTS' NAMES	Jazz P'pha'art Rudolph Of The Night	Clive Keith Fat Bastard
TYPICAL COMBATANTS' APPEARANCE	Large, overly muscled freak/ huge-breasted female	Large, overly-stomached freak/huge-breasted male
TYPICAL WEAPONS	Finely-honed martial arts skills/ supernatural powers	Beer glass/pickaxe handle/cheese grater on a stick
TYPICAL OUTFIT	Cape, G-string, giant bra made of old dustbin lids	Cape, G-string, giant bra made of old dustbin lids (alright, so they get some things right)

In Perspective

I'm a big fan of 3D rough 'n' tumble when it's done well. Unfortunately though, this isn't. If you want a decent beat 'em up session, you're still probably better off buying a PlayStation and playing *Tekken* or *Soul Blade*. If you want to play beat 'em ups on your PC, the rather outdated accelerated version of *Virtua Fighter Deluxe* is the one to go for.

Virtua Fighter Deluxe

FX Fighter

Breaking your toe on garden furniture

Wargods

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: P60

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick, keyboard, gamepad



Score

Mmmm. I'll take ten.

45

Price: £29.99

Release date: July

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171 258 3791

Website: www.gtinteractive.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

GULLIT

HODDLE

BECKENBAUER

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EA SPORTS
If it's in the game,
it's in the game.

FIFA SOCCER MANAGER

For Windows® 95

Extreme



Assault

Seeing as he was the only person in the office who admitted to being a fan of *The Whirlybirds*, we thought **Paul Ditta** should review *Extreme Assault* while the rest of us sat around watching re-runs of *Skippy* and *Bagpuss*.



S SOMEONE ONCE SAID (PROBABLY), PC games are a bit like women. Leaving aside the obvious comparison that like games, all most blokes want to do is get the fairer sex home and into their bedroom and spend

hours trying to work them out as plain sexism, maybe the statement should be explained further. What I mean to say is that they fall (very) broadly into two categories: the first type are the ones who take a long time to get to know. The ones who you have to spend a lot of time with and who eventually, when you've taken the time, turn out to either have been worth the effort or such a phenomenal waste of time you feel like slapping yourself every time they come to mind. The female equivalent to your average propeller head flight sim perhaps, or maybe something like X-COM or Heroes Of Might & Magic.

The second kind let you know a great deal about themselves very quickly. You've got a pretty good idea of what you've let yourself in for after the first couple of drinks or date, which can be good in itself and at the end of the day saves a lot of frustration. These are the PC equivalent of *Quake*, *Carmageddon* and *Command & Conquer*. And *Extreme Assault*, a horny-looking wench if ever there was one, that not only lays her cards



One Armed To The Teeth and one Baddass Attitude to go. D'ya want fries with that?



squarely on the table, but you as well! In the first five minutes. And keeps you hanging around for more. The PC equivalent of the women who, let's face it, you only ever meet on holiday in Greece or Ibiza. Bless 'em.

Sexy Mo Fo

Take a look at the screenshots. Do they look the business, or what? Do they have you simultaneously clapping with boundless joy at such flawless beauty while crying into your beer at the thought of another bloody upgrade to get the thing running smoothly?

Weep not! This game runs at 640x480 resolution, in high colour and smoother than a Teflon-coated baby's bum on a P133. Sans MMX, 3Dfx, PowerVR or anything else released by the vowel-hating hardware gurus of this world. Of course, there will be enhanced versions available to take advantage of the hardware if you've got it, but take my word for it, you won't have to rely on 3D accelerator cards to get slick-looking visuals and a decent frame rate on your Pentium.

Multiple key controls? Hah! Keep 'em. Manuals so thick you could cull seals with them? There's just no reason to worry with such tosh. This is in yer face, high speed, kick buttock action from the word go. Just load her up, get your briefing and start blasting. Short on ammo? Blast the crap out of some sap and see what they drop. Need new weapons? Look around, you'll find missiles, razor guns, lasers, lightning ▶



The cockpit has been kept simple to avoid confusion.



You don't need a 3D graphics card for good graphics, just a software house that does its job properly.

Optimisation

This game got me thinking. As I've mentioned already, the graphical detail in the game is phenomenal and doesn't require any 3D accelerator. This, of course, begs the question – if BlueByte can do it, then what the smeg is stopping other software houses? I don't mean everyone, just the ones who think that it is somehow our responsibility to buy the gear to make their games run. I know the relentless march of technology and the quest for the more realistic game experience means that you have to expect to upgrade your kit, but there are some firms that don't bother even trying to get the most out of existing technology, preferring to use new kit as a crutch for flabby routines. Food for thought or just sad repetition of a tired point? Okay, I'll shut up then.



bolts, thunderbolts and smart bombs just lying around waiting to be picked up and used as instruments of destruction. In an effort to keep things as simple as possible, the developers have kept the cockpit layout as user-friendly as possible so you can concentrate on killing rather than staring goggle-eyed at your instruments. You've got weapons and ammo to the left and right, shields above, radar bottom right and target in front. Find a victim, lock on and make your very own victim paté.

Extreme Assault is amazingly quick and easy to get into, and this is why it's such fun. I've spent a good few hours just learning to keep Comanches and Hinds in the air when all I've wanted to do is

The game is quick to grasp, and level design is sufficiently varied to hold short-term interest.



shoot something. This game lets me get straight in there and get on with playing it.


In this respect, *Extreme Assault* is a game with no pretensions. It does what it says on the box – good, fast, playable action that you can pick up and play any old time. Forget thinking too hard, just kill, kill and then kill some more, oh and occasionally rescue people, but mostly kill.

That's not to say that the game itself is simple. The levels are quite varied and as well put together as they are slobberingly good-looking. Similarly, there are plenty of them, with loads of little nooks and crannies to delve into and explore. This game oozes playability from every pore and drips fun in little puddles onto the carpet, er... maybe I'd better stop there.

Of course, there is the option to go head-to-head in one of four arenas in either the tank or the chopper. This can be played as a full-on *Deathmatch* style shoot-a-thon or you can take your time, look around, be a bit strategic and set about hunting down your prey before you let 'em feel the full power of your armoury. Just like the single-player game, you can apply as much tactical thought as you like; the important thing is, you can steam on in there, guns blazing, or come in through the back door, and both are ultimately satisfying.

And now for the bad news

Is there bad news? Well, yes, a bit. Little things. For starters there's no on-line facility, so it's network or nothing. Don't have a network at home in your bedroom? Me neither. When I wanted to show off my combat skills I had to persuade everyone in the office to down tools and join me (which admittedly, wasn't exactly a hard task). Second, every network player must have a copy of the game as there's no second disk to allow multi-player gaming with a chum à la *X-Wing* Vs *TIE Fighter*. And let's face it, four players is a bit minimalist by today's standards. Also, to be a true giant, a game needs to either create a new type of playing experience or at least put an original spin on an established genre. *Extreme Assault* doesn't do this. It takes a well-worn genre and does it extremely well, which is impressive enough, almost, but it isn't exactly bursting with originality.

With this in mind, *Extreme Assault* is a good game and, without a doubt, it's a worthy addition to any arcade action lover's collection. Do I recommend it? Heartily old chum. It's not a classic, but it's bloody good fun to play and is ideal for a quick hit, though the overall nature of the game means that your interest will no doubt wane after a few weeks of constant blasting and strafing about. At the end of the day, it's that girl you will get to know well enough to know you don't want to marry her, but you had a damn good time finding this out. 



In Perspective

Extreme Assault is a straightforward shooter and so appeals to arcade freaks. *Soviet Strike* is essentially an arcade game, but also has strategic elements. *Comanche 3* has a bit of both: arcade mode for people who just want to fly around and kill things, and the full monty 'realistic' mode for prop heads. The choice is yours.

Extreme Assault

Soviet Strike

Comanche 3

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: 486DX4/100
(P133 recommended)

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick, keyboard



Score

Extremely worthwhile.



Price: £29.99

Release date: August

Publisher: BlueByte

Telephone: 01604 232200

Website: www.bluebyte.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

**"Strap on your seatbelt,
turn up the 8-track, and get ready
for one helluva cool ride."**
-PC Games



**"One of the best gaming
experiences of the year."**

93% - PC Power

"Long on style and humour."

4/5 - CGW

**"An exciting and thoroughly
involving experience."**

8/10 - Edge

**"Interstate 76 is easily one of
the most immersive and
charismatic games around."**

8/10 - PC Review

"Fab, cool and groovy stuff."

89% - PC Home

**"Interstate 76 is one bad ass
mutha of a game."**

4/5 - C&VG

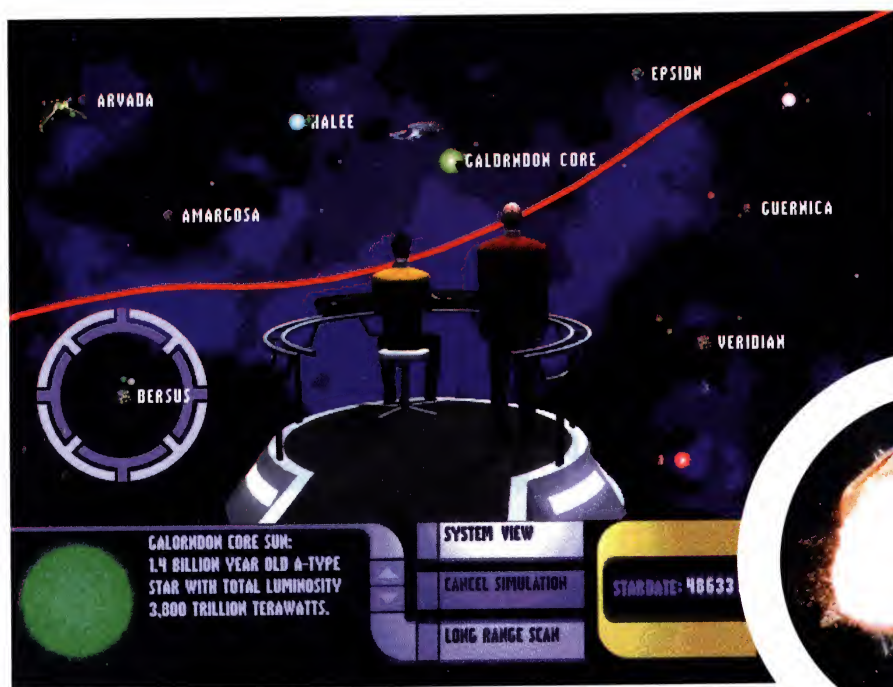


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(Far left) In order to predict where Soran will strike next, Stellar Cartography lets you simulate destroying planets. Of course, a couple of photon torpedoes and you could do it for real. (Above) I always thought Geordie couldn't see properly... but then what the hell do I know? (Left) Bang goes the warranty.

Star Trek: Generations

The latest *Star Trek* game is based on the rather dull movie of the same name. Paul Presley could hardly contain his excitement...

The Star Trek licence is a great one to have, and no doubt cost a lot of money, so why not do it justice?

GENERATIONS IS THE LONG-AWAITED interpretation of the first film to feature the Next Generation crew (it's certainly a timely release with the film having been out only, er, three-and-a-half years) and concerns a mad plot by an evil scientist to destroy entire planets in order to 'nudge' a giant space-time, ribbon-like thing towards a rickety ironwork platform on a desolate planet. The reason is that said scientist – Malcolm McDowell is Dr Tolian Soran – wants to be sucked into the ribbon to re-enter a Nirvana-like paradise. Why he has to destroy entire solar systems to do this as opposed to just buying a small spaceship and flying into it isn't entirely clear. It's no doubt got something to do with Graviton Inverter Fluxes or Dilithium Core Reactors or some other Star Trek technobabble that is always on hand to explain away such inconsistencies.

Let me play among the stars

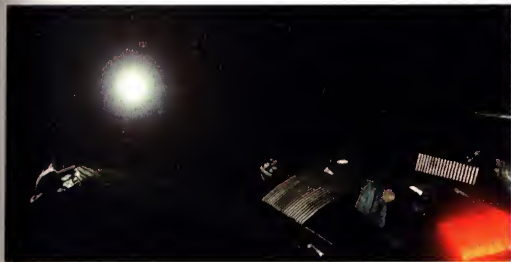
By opting to incorporate a first-person viewpoint, the developers have attempted to bring the player closer to the action and at the same time introduce a strong exploration vein à la *System Shock*. *Generations* most certainly isn't a 3D shoot 'em up. Sure, you have to pull out your phaser in the game, but if you start getting too trigger-happy, you'll just

end up in a bit of a mess as far as the campaign/storyline goes. Consequently, a lot of the game is spent exploring the different environments and getting your bearings. This would be okay if the engine could cope with detail. Sadly, it's just not up to it. When you consider that nearly half the screen is taken up with your control console/inventory, it doesn't make sense. Even when compared to the latest 3D Realms stuff, such as *Blood* and *Shadow Warrior* or LucasArts' *Outlaws*, it looks cumbersome and dated. There just isn't enough going on. The characters move like the wooden cut-outs in *The Great Escape* and the levels all look very angular and sparse. It's like walking around a half-dressed movie set. On the plus side, there are lots of them, and they're pretty varied, but they're just not interesting enough and you never feel as though you're immersed in what's going on. It would help if you could have conversations with other characters, but ultimately it's all very limited. If they'd opted to license the *Quake* or *Unreal* engine, it would have been a different story. Maybe next time?

As far as the structure of the game goes, it's pretty much based on the plot of the film, and therefore it's pretty linear. The player supposedly has access to a bit of the universe (roughly eight or nine different 'systems'), which must be explored to get to McDowell and the next 3D *Doom*-like section, but really you have to follow a set path otherwise you'll find that nothing much happens.



(Top) Data prepares for his backing role in Jean-Michel Jarre's next Docklands concert.



This is all done in Stellar Cartography, with Picard and Data exchanging concerned looks and brief musings on the nature of evil, and makes up one of the three main sections of the game. The idea is that you scan a system to find signs of Soran, and then you nip over there at Warp Nine and beam down to his location to try to stop him.

This would have been fine if it had been as open and free as was intended. What actually happens is that you just nip from one system to another doing absolutely sod all until you either find him or run out of time and have to watch another star system get destroyed (which signals the end of your game).

Das Raumschiff

Occasionally you might run into an enemy ship that prompts a spot of space combat (the second section of the game), which again is nowhere near as good as it should have been. While shouting "Fire!", rising dramatically from your seat and clenching your fist might look great on the silver screen, actually piloting a ship like the Enterprise in the middle of a fight isn't nearly as good. Naturally, a large ship, space combat simulator should be like a submarine sim – lots of tactical manoeuvring, searching for locks and firing torpedoes (remember the sequences in the second film or at the end of the sixth?). Unfortunately, *Generations* treats the Enterprise as if it were an X-Wing, allowing you to bank and swoop as though it were controlled by a joystick – which instantly shatters any illusions of 'realism'.

The other problem is that this whole section is actually a 'punishment' for straying from the plotline (apart from the one or two occasions when the plot demands a spot of intergalactic rock-throwing), as in the space combat from the original *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* adventure game. It's supposed to make you think, "Wow, the universe is a living, constantly active beast with danger at every turn." What you actually think is, "Wow, this game is 100 per cent linear and about as free as Myra Hindley should be."

Phasers on 'Limp'

The third (and main) sections of the game are the away missions. When you locate Soran in Stellar Cartography, you beam down to his location and try to foil his scheme. This all takes place in a *Doom*-style environment, albeit with a higher puzzle than shooting element.



(Above) Armed and on the Enterprise. Right, now where's that twat Wesley? (Above right) The quality of the FMV is actually pretty good and it incorporates footage from the film in a very slick fashion.



(Above left) Turn your bloody headlight down mate. I dunno, Sunday starship pilots... (Above) Marina Sirtis and a swimming pool. The possibilities are endless.

Here the game slightly redeems itself. At least you feel like you're doing something, although *Generations'* *Doom*-alike sections never quite attain that level of playability or immersion. There is a certain curiosity attached to them, but never enough to truly warrant prolonged attention.

They're also prone to the same kind of flaws in *Trek* logic that affect the rest of the game. Each away mission comprises just one crew member, and the way that some of the crew are shoe-horned into the game is almost laughable. One mission, for instance, involves infiltrating a secret Romulan military base, requiring guile, cunning, tactical awareness and espionage skills. So who do they send in? Counsellor Deanna Troi, a woman whose main role in the TV show seemed to be to stand chestfully next to Picard on the bridge and say, "I'm sensing that he's troubled and upset," after the Enterprise had just shot a torpedo or two up a Klingon captain's ship. I mean, come off it, she's the emotional interest in the show, not an action hero.

I'm a Trekkie/er, it's great

If you're a massive *Trek* fan, you might forgive some of the misgivings in *Generations*. That said, I consider myself to be of this ilk and at times I just felt bored. I really wanted to like it, but just couldn't muster up any enthusiasm, especially after seeing what LucasArts are doing with *Jedi Knight*. I couldn't help feeling a bit cheated. The *Star Trek* licence is a great licence to have and no doubt costs an awful lot of money, so why not do it justice? The level of presentation of the game is undoubtedly high, but when it comes down to it, *Generations* is really rather average. **Z**



In Perspective

If I were to be more honest than a man who owns up to leaving an unflushed log in the toilet bowl, I would have to say that *Star Trek* hasn't had the best of times on the PC. The cream of the crop so far is the original *Next Gen* game, *A Final Unity* – and even that's aged worse than William Shatner's hairline. In a curious parallel to real life, the original series' game is probably the best of all. The non-*Trek* *System Shock* still stands tall.

Star Trek: Generations

Star Trek: A Final Unity

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

System Shock

Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard



Score

About as good as the film was, to be honest.



Price: £44.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: MicroProse

Telephone: 01454 893893

Website: www.microprose.com

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Personal Computers

Atomic Bomberman



Everyone else is largin' it down the Crown and Sceptre, but **Charlie Brooker** is in the office trying to think of an explosives-related pun for the *Atomic Bomberman* intro. But he can't. Blast.



MORE OR LESS ACADEMIC, THIS REVIEW. Atomic Bomberman is a gumby-fresh and altogether fly version of Hudsonsoft's classic multi-player grenade banquet – a brand new, bells and whistles translation of a game so inherently perfect, you could write a black-and-white, stop-motion, low-res Vic 20 version, then force each participant to play with their feet, and it would still be thumb-gnawingly addictive, cheek-clutchingly exciting, and glans-poppingly amusing. In fact, the programming team would have to try really hard to totally cock it up. They'd have to start thinking things like "Hmmm... those bomber dudes... let's put 'em on horseback, yeah? And give 'em swords and stuff. And mullet hairdos. And make it so you can, like, cast spells and fly and shit. And hey – let's take all the bombs out too."

Thankfully, they didn't think anything of the sort. Instead they decided to retain all the basics and only fiddle about with the aspects that actually matter the least: namely the graphics and sound effects. Oh yeah, and the number of players. But more on that later.



(Above) Aside from the ten supplied stages, players can design their own with the level editor. How lovely.

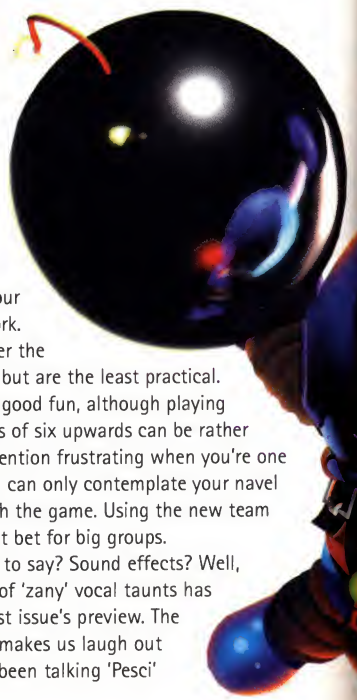
Regular readers will have clocked last month's preview and playable demo of *Atomic Bomberman*, so we'll focus on what differentiates this version from the others instead. PC owners have had a crack at the game before in the guise of *Dynablast*, but this latest incarnation boasts a few utterly unique features.

Aim away from face

First things first: the visuals. The animé player-characters have been given an 'American' makeover, modelled in 3D Studio (or equivalent), rendered, animated and turned into sprites. They're far less stumpy than the Japanese originals, and consequently far less cute. Veterans of SNES *Bomberman* might initially wrinkle their noses, but these Bombermen visibly react to the onscreen action. Trap yourself between two bombs, for instance, and your character is likely to start praying, panicking or digging his own grave. There's also a pleasing selection of different 'death animations' cued up, ready to unfold when you inevitably die – sometimes you'll lose an arm in the blast, sometimes your entire head. The more functional graphical aspects, such as the animated 'walking' sequences, are also impeccable. Pile a huge number of players onscreen and the frame rate drops significantly, although never so far as to render the game unplayable. And incidentally, *real* purists can always turn the new spangly bits off and play in lo-fi 'Classic' mode if they prefer.

Oh yeah, the multi-player option. Up to ten of you can battle it out at one time. Yes, *ten*. There's barely room to move, of course, but that's all part of the fun. To fully enjoy this gameplay mode, you'll need one of the following: 1) Ten Microsoft Sidewinder joypads, daisy-chained together and plugged into one huge, throbbing *Demon Seed*-style PC, or 2) a modem, a phone line and an Internet account for bombing the crap out of Americans and other Web lowlifes, or 3) your own local area network. Options 1) and 3) offer the smoothest gameplay, but are the least practical. They're all screaming good fun, although playing free-for-alls in groups of six upwards can be rather confusing – not to mention frustrating when you're one of the first to die and can only contemplate your navel while the others finish the game. Using the new team play option is the best bet for big groups.

What else is there to say? Sound effects? Well, the constant stream of 'zany' vocal taunts has grown on us since last issue's preview. The Joe Pesci soundalike makes us laugh out loud (because we've been talking 'Pesci'



"There's also a pleasing selection of different 'death animations' ready to unfold when you inevitably die."



non-stop ourselves, ever since we watched *Casino*). The Jim Carrey/Forrest Gump side of things is a little more annoying. Still, you have got the option of recording your own taunts, so the sky's the limit as far as bad language goes. See if you have it in you to visibly turn the air blue.

Light fuse and retire

So it's 90 per cent for *Atomic Bomberman*. It's undeniably addictive, and almost impossible to screw up. The recently-released Sega Saturn version is much better, although you can't play it over the Internet, and even if you could, you'd be hard-pressed to find a single other Saturn-owning sucker out there. But it does have cuter graphics, spanglier sound and a nice overall feel, so if you do have a Saturn, buy that version instead. Also, don't even consider parting with your cash if you're planning to play solely against the computer because the AI isn't brilliant. Still, those two gripes aside, you can purchase with confidence. Especially since it's cheap. **Z**



Bombs and songs

Ever since mankind learnt to combine notes, words and rhythm in order to create 'songs', we've been inundated with explosives-related popular music stuff. Don't believe us? This is just the tip of the iceberg...

MR BOOMBASTIC - SHAGGY

Rasp-throated ragga opus featuring lyrics so nonsensical that a team of eight English professors with degrees in lingual rationalisation toiled for six years in a doomed attempt to fathom its meaning. Three were driven insane, one committed suicide, while the remaining four shaved their heads and formed a naked dance troupe called 'The Bottom Sailors'.

BOOM! SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE THE ROOM - JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE

Similarly ludicrous slice of floor-filling hip-hop pop, with a fair chunk of outrageous homosexual pillow talk thrown in. Well yo, Pump it up, Prince.

SONIC BOOM BOY - WESTWORLD

Dayglo power-pop from mid-'80s one-hit wonders. Their other stuff was "quite dancey" says Jezza. "A Republica before their time," muses Wag. "They were crap" interjects Spike, hitting the nail on the head.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN - EUROPE

Apocalyptic epic from a band with absurdly large hair. They looked like they had fucking haystacks on their heads, for crying out loud.

BANG BANG - BA ROBERTSON

History of human conflict condensed into staccato bubblegum pop lyrics by bloke with Weird Al Yankovich haircut. A weirdy one-off.

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG - DICK VAN DYKE

Auto-autoerotic sing 'em up. The car flies around and makes little children's faces light up. It's all a load of bollocks, if you ask me.

WE HAVE EXPLOSIVE - FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON

Industro-rave from the Cubase maestros. Sounds like an angry Dalek shouting "we have explosive" over and over again, while a Cyberman tumbles down a flight of metal stairs and someone slams a car door in the background, though none of that was in the video, apparently.

ATOM BOMB - FLUKE

"Baby's got an atom bomb," they sang, all stupid and breathy and with a faux American accent. Still, could have been worse. Could have been Europe.

BOOM-BANG A BANG - LULU

Neither know nor care about this. About things blowing up, I suppose.

SONG FOR GUY (FAWKES) - ELTON JOHN

This is lame. Let's just finish the boxout right here, eh?

In Perspective

Atomic Bomberman is a simple, devilishly addictive multi-player puzzle cum action game. So are the following. Except *Quake*, where you just shoot each other repeatedly in the arms, face and neck. But they are all multi-player games. Okay? Good.

Atomic Bomberman

Baku Baku Animal

Puzzle Bobble

Deathmatch Quake

Spy Vs Spy (CBM 64)

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: Pentium 60

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Gamepad/keyboard

Note: You can daisychain up to ten Microsoft Sidewinder pads together for multi-player fun.



Score

A decent conversion of an utterly bulletproof game, and at a price that's 'nice'.



Price: £19.99

Release date: End of June

Publisher: Interplay

Telephone: 01628 423666

Website: www.interplay.com

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Pandemonium

To get 'into character', Paul Presley attached a pair of giant springs to his shoes ready to indulge in some spritely jumpin' around.



H GOD, A PLATFORM GAME. HAVE YOU any idea how hard the 'In Perspective' box is going to be to write? Among the many crimes against society that games consoles continue to inflict, the continuation of the platform game genre surely has to be one of the biggest culprits. Every time I see a jolly-looking sprite leaping about amid garishly coloured 'worlds', my mind harks back to the mid-'80s and the manifold horrors that were Ocean film licences. They were everywhere. No matter what the film was in question, Ocean's developers always seemed to think that the best depiction of the various intricate plotlines and subtle characterisations was to feature the lead character jumping around on ledges. They were dark times indeed.

Frankly, I thought we'd seen the last of them with the advent of sophisticated PC gaming pleasures, but thanks to Messrs Sony, Nintendo and Sega, they continue to haunt us. Now it might sound like I'm not particularly keen on the platform game, but that's not entirely true. I'm opposed to run-of-the-mill platform games, just as I'm opposed to run-of-the-mill adventure games, strategy games, flight sims and any other game that is content to sit in the armchair of averageness. I wouldn't say that *Pandemonium* falls entirely into this category, but rather that it's perching on the armrest, with a foot on the pouffe of credibility.

'Pouffe' of credibility?

You see, for all the (admittedly impressive) 3D on show, it's a remarkably two-dimensional game. Graphically, *Pandemonium* is a feast. Smooth scrolling 3D that swoops from one perspective to another with all the ease of an episode of *Homicide: Life On The Streets*. If you have a 3Dfx card nestled in your PC, then things look even better than they do in the PlayStation version.

But beyond the visuals, the game is very straightforward. Unlike *Mario* on the N64 or *Tomb Raider*, you are stuck to



a rigid path of movement. You have plenty of freedom in the Y-axis to jump from one platform to the next, stomp on creatures and so on, but despite the camera giving the illusion of 360 degree movement, you are always moving in a straight line from left to right (or vice versa). No Z-axis to speak of. Very two-dimensional.

And it's because of this that I just can't help but feel a little cheated. The rest of the game's elements are great. Very jolly little numbers like metamorphosing characters, bonuses that keep the game interesting and fresh, different lead roles with different abilities, well-structured levels that are genuinely challenging. Everything, in fact, that a good game should have, and yet I still feel that it should be so much more simply because of the other titles out there.

The moon on a stick

Now I have to balance this biting, savage criticism (*Steady on now - Ed.*) with a true story. My brother really likes *Pandemonium*. A lot. He's been playing it on a regular basis when I'm not using the PC to rattle out 3000 words of eloquent prose about radishes for my other job as Political Commentator for *Root Vegetable Grower's Digest*. Which means that if you're more disposed to this sort of thing, you might well be perfectly satisfied with your £30 purchase.

The lack of freedom is a personal gripe. You might not have such reservations, in which case, like my brother, you'll probably find *Pandemonium* an enjoyable experience. But then he also likes Don Johnson, so read into that what you will. **Z**

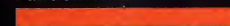


(Above left and right) You can swap characters between levels, the jester being able to attack enemies without a weapon and the cutesy female having a better jumping ability. (Centre) Various weapons include a shrinking ray, a freeze ray and a sort of, er, pinkish death ray. (*And you call yourself a writer - Ed.*)

In Perspective

Look, there aren't any other platform games on the PC. At least not that I can remember. Er... *Lemmings 3D*, sort of. There's *Mario 64* on the Nintendo that is supposed to be The Best Game Ever™ (not that I've played it all that much). PC platformers sort of underwent a revolution and turned themselves into things like *Tomb Raider* and *Little Big Adventure*, so to be honest there aren't any fair comparisons I can make. Life isn't fair however, so...

Pandemonium



Rayman



Tomb Raider



Tech Specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P75

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick



Score

It's good with 3Dfx, but don't expect any miracles.



Price: £29.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: BMG Interactive

Telephone: 0171 973 0011

Website:

<http://www.bmginteractive.com>

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CHARON

K'LHANNA

PRA'MIN

ARCHON

ROCHAN

DAH'MON TARG

PERFECT ASSASSIN

PRESENTED BY GROLIER INTERACTIVE

THE POINT
WHERE REALITY
AND ANNIHILATION
COLLIDE.

"...PERFECT ASSASSIN COULD WELL FILL THAT GAP
BETWEEN ULTIMA AND BIOFORCE."
PC ZONE

"THIS IS A FANTASTIC FUTURE WORLD
BLASTING ADVENTURE."
CD ROM GAMES

"THE GAME STORY WILL TWIST AND TURN
LIKE EVERY GOOD SCI FI EPIC."
PC POWER

GROLIER INTERACTIVE PRESENTS PERFECT ASSASSIN A VERITAS PRODUCTION

CREATED BY KEV WALKER DEVELOPED BY SYNTHETIC DIMENSIONS

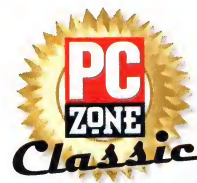
STARRING CHARON AS THE PERFECT ASSASSIN



GROLIER INTERACTIVE



Pete Sampras Tennis 97



Patrick McCarthy is extremely familiar with the precise handling of small, furry balls. He used to work in a toy factory, neutering Garfields.

as pleasurable. But it's a bloody good game. The phrase "eminently playable" springs to mind – but only because Jeremy's been repeating it like a mantra while playing it and it's stuck in my head like a '70s Eurovision entry.

Inevitable Super Tennis reference

The finest tennis game in the history of the civilised world is universally recognised as being *Super Tennis*, the old SNES classic. It had everything: fast action, superb, intuitive gameplay that was picked up in seconds but had all sorts of scope once you'd mastered it, and players with heads the size of pumpkins. You really couldn't ask for more. It never did make it to the PC. But how would it be if I said that this was the nearest you're likely to get to it for some time on the PC? It really is that good: it's fast, it's fun, it's easy to play...

Don't even think about playing the game in the first-person view, cos you'll play as badly as the next British hopeful at Wimbledon.



"Just to have a PC tennis game that's remotely playable is something of a shock..."

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS CAME out a while ago on the PlayStation. It was extremely well received, scoring up in the nineties more or less across the board – but you only have to release a PlayStation game that works to get a score in the eighties. People in the office who played it said that, like Tim Henman, it was somewhat over-rated and not without flaws. Unlike Mr Henman, however, who at the last count seemed to be pretty normal looking, it had one or two extra features that weren't really necessary: bits of FMV that did nothing for the game; an unnecessary slowness, and so on. Apparently, the projected PC version was very ropey, and instead of chucking it out and hoping for the best, Codemasters held it back another six months to get it right. And, as your local car dealer friends would say, they done right by us.

Just to have a PC tennis game that's remotely playable is something of a shock, after all the half-arsed, poorly designed, bizarrely controlled cock-ups we've been presented with in the past. To find one that plays this well is astonishing; even more surprising than listening to the Australians struggling against England in the First Test. And it's almost as pleasurable. Well, alright, it's not nearly



Character detailing is to a very high standard, as is the animation, which is surprising considering that the developers used British players for the motion capturing. Unlike some footie games, the animation doesn't affect the speed of the game.

Everyone's a character

Although the players in the game are varied and have differing abilities, the designers have resisted the (probably slight) temptation to satirise or produce caricatures of specific real-life players. For example, the female German star, instead of possessing a lithe, winsome body and a nose like an InterCity 125, looks like John Prescott in a Bavarian milkmaid's outfit and has the demeanour of an enormous... er... person of alternative sexual orientation. But



guess at least her playing attributes are nothing short of outstanding. Meanwhile, the Spanish chickster, who in real life would be a top five player or so but look like a pygmy hippo in a dress, is tall and willowy, and completely, utterly useless. But if you want

conclusive proof that we're in fantasy territory here, you only have to check out the ratings for the English 'gels'. They can actually hit the ball. And none of them have calves bigger than their heads.

Details, details

There are the usual options: tournament, knock out and one-off play, a range of players to play against, each with their own attributes (shot strength, shot accuracy and so on). The thing that's so impressive about it is the fact that all the characters are motion-captured. (Apparently British tennis players did all the motions, but don't let that worry you: they've fixed it so you'll be able to hit the ball.) And even though they're motion captured, the game plays very quickly.

It's very atmospheric, too: they've set great store by all the crowd noises included, and it works very well – bursts of

applause after good shots, gasps when you miss a sitter, orgasmic screams when you change your shirt... it's just like the telly. Except you don't have that bloody irritating laughter and smug applause from the *Daily Mail* readers who go to Wimbledon.

There are four basic shots (hard flat hit, slice, lob and drop-shot), so a four-button gamepad is pretty much an essential if you want to enjoy the game fully (in fact, two would be better). But according to where you are on court, and the button and direction you press, a wide variety of other shots can be played, including topspin shots and even backhand smashes. The best thing is that the animations adapt to play the shots – even when you see them in slow-motion replay.

If you've been waiting for a decent tennis game for the PC, here it is. If you haven't, here it still is. One of the best arcade sports games around. **Z**



It's so realistic, players even scuff their knees.

In Perspective

Okay, so it still isn't quite as remarkable as the all-time SNES classic *Super Tennis*, but *Sampras 97* on the PC is a damn sight more playable than the troubled PlayStation version. There really is very little to compare it with as far as other tennis games on the PC are concerned apart from Philips' *International Tennis Open* which was released about three years ago and now looks very dated.

Pete Sampras Tennis 97

Every other PC tennis game

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486 (P60 Windows 95)

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad (recommended)

Note: Windows 95 version available; DirectX-compatible video card and driver needed



Players

You get some strange people playing tennis these days. Especially if you win all the tournaments in the game, at which point you'll get to play against the secret characters. (And if you beat them, play as them...)

GIGGLES

A towering punkette in a vest, complete with Mohawk haircut, a scary snarl and a tattooed cheek. Plays like a lunatic: good at everything, but especially good at diving around (even if she takes about half an hour to get up again afterwards).

BUBBLES

An even more towering dominatrix who likes to play in leather bondage gear. Strangely, for a boss-type character, her ratings aren't that high. But boy, can she wield that whip.

SOLOMON ZODIAC

A big, black pimp-type guy. Huge shoulders allow him to hit the ball like it's been fired from a rocket launcher. Luckily for you, his serve is mysteriously weak. This could be because he wears a tight pinstripe zoot suit and can't get his arms above his head. Or not.

JIMMY "FLEX" WAGNER

Official "coolest character in the game". Flex wears a seventies-style Adidas tracksuit and an Afro the size of Wales. He's fast about the court and dives about like a Colombian goalkeeper. He's also given to making Michael Jackson-style yelps at his opponent, and usually there isn't any children in the crowd.

Score

Excellent stuff. Quite remarkable. And of course, eminently playable.



Price: £39.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Codemasters

Telephone: 01926 814132

Website: www.sampras.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Pro Pinball: Timeshock!



Combine the words "pin" and "ball" and most of our sick band of reviewers would work some kind of Operation Spanner reference into their intro. Fortunately, **Patrick McCarthy** is a good Catholic boy. And as such, profoundly unimaginative.



You may only get one table, but it's packed with features, hidden games and looks fantastic. Improved ball dynamics means greater ball control and trickshots.

T

HERE AREN'T THAT MANY GAMES knocking about that inspire saddoes (*Er, better make that aficionados* – Ed.) the world over to get all excited and start their own unofficial Websites, brimming over with hints, tips, cheaty codes and suchlike. But *Pro Pinball: The Web* was one of them. Now we have the next table in the series. And it's better. In fact, it's better in every which way. But before we launch into why...

What's new, pussyface? (Whoa-oh-oh-oh)

Basically, the whole game has a 'plot' which is based around a revolving time crystal, set in the top of the table, which spins around and takes you to different time zones, each of which has different objectives and different sub-game sequences. Just by sending balls up ramps and into holes at the right time, you'll find yourself climbing Mount Rushmore, winning a chariot race, or even digging the Channel Tunnel – although apparently the opportunity to later set fire to the open-topped goods trains travelling through the tunnel has been overlooked.

As before, the attention to detail is bordering on the ridiculous. Most of it can only be appreciated if you check out the cut-scenes.



New features include a Challenge mode, in which whatever wonderful multi-ball bonuses you've spent hours setting up for yourself are passed on to the next player if you don't capitalise on them. (Now that will certainly help spread harmony among your chums.) There's a Novice mode that lets the complete morons among us learn more about the table. Like a prominent Nazi leader, you only get one ball, but you're allowed a minimum of two minutes on the table no matter how many times you cock up. And there's a Tournament mode for ninjas, with no random awards or bonus balls.

Anoraks can access a pretend 'operator's menu', which lets you customise game elements and check fascinating facts, such as the average game time. You can even 'test' the lights. Best of all, though, is the return of "The Voice" – voted World's Dirtiest Computer Game Voice of the Year. The way she says:

"Don't move! ... Now, lock those balls..." is obviously intentional. But we're suckers for it.

Shine those balls

As I said, *Pro Pinball: Timeshock!* is better in every way. It looks better – the table can be viewed at up to 1600x1200 resolution in Truecolour

if you have the hardware, at which resolution you can practically see your face in the balls. It plays better – the game is more structured, and you have a much better idea of what you're supposed to be doing at any given point. The mechanics are better – you can even trap a ball behind a flipper. It even sounds better, thanks to Dolby Surround Sound and sampled effects taken from real pinball tables. Unfortunately though, Bruce Foxton and Jake Burns are once again responsible for the music. But you can't have everything. **Z**

In Perspective

The fact that the *Pro Pinball* range only provides one table at a time doesn't mean they're not value for money – the tables are so well designed and incorporate so much longevity, that they're far better value than multi-table games. If you've been put off by other pinball releases, check this one out and see what you've been missing. The ball dynamics, attention to detail, the graphics and bonus levels elevate it way above the rest. If you have one pinball game in your collection, make sure this is it.

Pro Pinball: Timeshock!

Pro Pinball: The Web

Other Pinball Games

Pinball In A Pub, Surrounded By Knife-Wielding Maniacs

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb (32Mb recommended)

Processor: P60 (P166 recommended)

Graphics: 1Mb PCI/Local Bus Graphics card (8Mb for maximum settings)

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard; those ThrustMaster Flipper things

Score

Pinball games don't come any better than this.

97

Price: £29.99

Release date: Out now

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Telephone: 0181 343 7337

Website: www.empire.co.uk

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

Atlantis

The Lost Tales

Don't forget
your passport...
...the local
authorities are
particularly
nasty.



PC Review:

"Drooled over Atlantis? Don't bother wiping yourself down.
Instead drool over it some more..."

"Atlantis mixes Cryo's trademark stunning visuals and
dreamlike atmosphere with new cuttingedge technology."

Featuring



technology

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Imperium Galactica



(Main) Outer space's Hanger Lane Gyrotory System. (Right) So that's what happened to that Michael Jackson statue.

Merging four of the best space-based strategy wargames around, *Imperium Galactica* propels Paul Presley off into orbit to schmuse with the stars.

I'VE MENTIONED THIS BEFORE, BUT SINCE I'm not one not to labour a point, I'll mention it again. Rules Of Engagement 2 is far and away the best space-based strategy wargame available, not least because of its ability to 'merge' with a second game (Breach 2) in order to play its away team missions.

It's that 'merging' (or Interlocking Game System as they call it) that elevates it to a higher level than its rivals. We've all had that dream – I wish Game X would work with Game Y and then both of them with Game Z. That would be so cool. Well *Rules Of Engagement 2* does. And that's why it's the best. *Imperium Galactica* sort of does this as well, and that's why it's also the best. Or the new best. Whatever.

Are you mad?

While it doesn't actually merge two different games together, it does incorporate elements from about four of the best strategy style games in the one package, and surprisingly, it works. Damn well. The games in question are *Ascendancy* (or *Masters Of Orion II*, depending on personal preference), *SimCity*, *Command & Conquer* and *ROE2*. It then wraps them all up within an ongoing sci-fi storyline

and finishes the package off with the kind of presentation that the *Wing Commander* series wouldn't be ashamed to use. It's the total package... almost.

You are the newly-promoted captain of a cruiser in Earth's space fleet, sent to patrol a small sector of the galaxy and keep the peace. At first you are given specific missions (protect a supply ship, fend off an alien attack etc) and as you progress and earn promotion, more of the galaxy is

opened to you and your task gets broader until eventually you are just told to keep the peace and expand Earth's horizons.

This is all achieved in the various sub-sections – colony development is similar to

SimCity, space exploration is like *Ascendancy*, space combat is along the lines of *ROE2* and any land combat takes its direction from *C&C*, except it uses the *SimCity* style map.

And it's great?

Imperium Galactica is captivating and challenging; it's also constantly expanding in scope, giving the player a good learning curve as it grows. It's stunningly well-presented too with some genuinely entertaining FMV sequences. The one aspect that could have been better is the space combat section. It's all a bit basic and small in scale compared to the rest, which is why it warrants a score of 90 and no more. It might sound a bit harsh, but because space combat is a large part of the game, it's this that pulls the score down.

Otherwise, *Imperium Galactica* is a game that's not afraid to set its sights high and has subsequently managed to reach them. Now if only it merged with *Rules Of Engagement 2* I'd be really happy. **Z**



Not exactly an attack on the Death Star, but it'll do.

In Perspective

The four comparisons aren't really fair because *Imperium Galactica* is like a hybrid of them all. While not as deep in each respective section, together they achieve a unity that's hard to beat. Only the space combat section is a letdown and that's where *ROE2* scores higher, so bear in mind the following are all comparisons to *IG*'s different elements. If you compared to the total game, **reverse** the scores.

Masters Of Orion II

Command & Command

Rules Of Engagement 2

Imperium Galactica

Tech Specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX2/66

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: 4x CD-ROM recommended



Score

But for one section it would be a perfect game.



Price: £tba

Release date: Late July

Publisher: GT Interactive

Telephone: 0171 258 3791

Web site: www.gtinteractive.com

dan The People's Choice
Personal Computers

THE JOKE'S ON YOU IF YOU DON'T GET IT.

"PANDEMONIUM is
positively stunning"

"Platform perfection
has finally hit us"

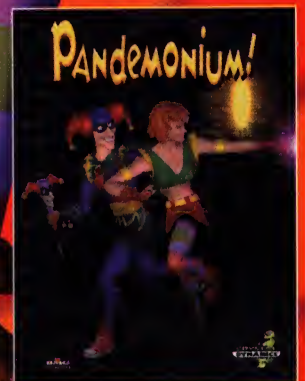
9/10
Official Playstation

92%
Mean Machines Playstation



**OUT NOW
ON PC**

PANDEMONIUM!



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15 terrain types and over 60 missions!

SVGA graphics with over 65,000 colours unlike any other action strategy game.



Night missions add new tactical scenarios to master.



"Direct Control" feature allows you to jump into the action for fast paced arcade style play.

CONQUEST EARTH

Review ZONE Extra!

No, our review section isn't over just yet, as here are some of the games that tried to escape our attention but failed, miserably.



Er... throw a six to start. Then something happens... er... Oh sod waiting, I'm outta here.

DECISIVE BATTLES OF WWII: THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE



In case you haven't guessed already (particularly if you're a US citizen), this game is based on the Battle Of The Bulge which actually kicked off on 16 December 1944 when German troops launched a surprise attack on the US around the Ardennes.

Basically the Yanks were caught with their pants down, and the Germans administered a good cuffing until reinforcements from the US Third Army arrived to relieve the besieged town of Bastogne and the Germans ran out of supplies. And then we won. Amen.

Well, that's the history lesson, but what's the game like? Well, to be honest, it's not up to the usual SSI standards (although in fairness they only published it; the game was written by SSG who don't actually have much to do with SSI). The game kicks off in the usual fashion; you choose which side you want to represent, select a scenario and off you go. You can play specific battles from the Ardennes Offensive or the whole campaign, depending on how much time you've got on your hands

and how many friends you haven't got. This bit is fairly straightforward and is in fact the game's last tango with rational thought, as from this point on it all starts to get quite dire.

Once you are in the game you are faced with an interface that had me feeling utterly clueless as to what was going on, even though I'd read the 60-page manual. It seemed simple enough – and if the interface was even remotely understandable then it no doubt would be – but I just couldn't get on with it at all. Not only does it have more faults than San Andreas, but the mouse options are a joke, the graphics look as though they've been designed in Braille and despite being a bit of a whizz at the other SSI strategy games, I had no idea what was going on, and nor did I even care.

It's not only the presentation that lets the game down, there's the AI which is quite clearly mad. Basically, it either follows set piece moves or goes a little bit crazy and sends troops in a sort of Viennese Waltz around the map. Not only does this make following the 'action' extremely tricky, but it succeeds in reducing the whole experience to a farcical level. Even if the game looked crap, a decent AI would have softened the

blow, but it just makes things worse. It's a real shame, because it looked as though SSI were starting to get things together, but then they go and release this piece of plop which has single-handedly put back the clock five years. Avoid at all costs.

Daniel Emery

Publisher: Mindscape/SSI

Price: £29.99

Tel: 01444 246333

15

NITRO RACERS

Anyone who lurked around amusement arcades during the 80s is bound to have come across *Super Sprint*. A top-down racing game, it came replete with four steering wheels and was pretty much a primitive precursor to today's network gaming. The one-player stand-up version can still be found in chip shops at the occasional seaside town that someone forgot to close down, but with *Nitro Racers* those heady days can be relived in the safety of your own abode. Although strictly speaking it isn't the same game, it can safely be

described as a tribute, and it ably recaptures the feel of the

arcade version – albeit without the hindrance of glue-sniffers in puffer jackets scrounging cigarettes.

The top-down perspective remains intact and there's also a pseudo *Micro Machines*-style scrolling view and a split-screen affair. The game is playable via a simple arcade option which involves a championship played out over 15

different courses, with a variety of terrains including asphalt, mud, ice and sand. The tracks are of varying degrees of complexity, although the charmingly named Ring Piece consists of a simple circle. A further 15 courses come into play under the management option, whereby cars are upgraded between races by purchasing new tyres, better engines and so forth. More efficient pit crews can also be hired, making those all-important pit stops slightly quicker.

The inevitable accompanying dance music is as generic as it comes, although the manual sees fit to inform us of the names of the available tracks which include such aural delights as *Synthetic Nightmare* and *Weirdness Of Sanity*. Cheers. Ultimately, as a one-player game *Nitro Racers* is fairly limited, its real value being in network play. What do you mean you haven't got eight PCs? Best get down the arcade then.

Steve Hill

Publisher: 3DO

Price: £19.99

Tel: 0181 541 4082

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SAFECRACKER

Safecracker is a game in which you have to crack open a bunch of safes. "In a safe, no one can hear you scream" reads a caption in the title sequence. Hilarious! Sadly, once the laughter has subsided, the game proper begins – and it soon becomes clear that *Safecracker* chews pole, big time.

Considering that the *Safecracker* 'engine' consists mainly of Apple QuickTime VR segments all stitched together in Macromedia Director, perhaps it's only inevitable that it feels more like a multimedia presentation than a game. The presentation is



Well it's not exactly *Screamers 2*, is it? But doesn't it take you back to the time when you used to bunk off double maths and spend hours in the chippie?



"In a safe, no one can hear you scream." Ha ha! That's still funny. Ha ha ha ha ha. Ho. Hee.

downright pedestrian and the visuals are the PC equivalent of an Eric Clapton guitar solo. The measure of skill involved is undeniably immense, yet the end result is sufficiently bland that your mind starts wandering after six seconds. Despite the imposition of time limits, the slack pace would tax the patience of a sentient housebrick. It's the sort of thing that impresses computer game virgins and Macintosh owners immensely – but seasoned gamers can expect to be bored arseless. Soundtrack's alright though, I suppose.

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: GT Interactive
Price: £29.99
Tel: 0171 258 3791

40

UNCLE HENRY'S MINDBLOWER

Uncle Henry's *Chunkblower*, more like. I know, it's pointless getting wound up over this kind of thing, but it's bloody hard to avoid – *Uncle Henry's Mindblower* is a cheap, repackaged compendium of 12 puzzles from *7th Guest*, *11th Hour* and the roundly-ignored *Clandestiny*. Solve all 12 and you are 'rewarded' with a brand new thirteenth conundrum. Whoopie doo. We're talking screenfuls of 'sumptuous' graphics, oversized animated mouse pointers and a double helping of chin-stroky toss. It's little more than an interactive version of those dull puzzles you find tucked away in the Saturday editions of toffee-nosed newspapers, and as such should appeal to both Richard Whiteley and Gyles Brandreth. But no one else. Because it's so sodding boring it'll make anyone with an ounce of spunk in them want to go out and kill. And yes, it may well be 'only' 15 quid, but a Rubik's Cube costs less, lasts longer, and wastes far less electricity. Take your pick.

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: JM Interactive
Price: £14.99
Website: www.tbyte.com

44

PC Zone almost recommends

SIERRA SPORTS GOLF

Sierra's Front Page Sports range of games are always spot on or at least close: their baseball game is the best on the PC, and their American football game can put up a good argument against *Madden* for best as well. And now we have their golf game. It's pretty good too, though it can't compete with *Links* and *PGA*.

The trouble lies mainly with its big selling point which is the swing system: you pull the mouse towards you for the backswing, and push away to hit. To draw or fade a shot, you angle the mouse to left or right respectively as you move it. It's a bit like those old pub games with the huge trackball that fat blokes with wire-framed glasses used to get so excited about, and while it's a nice idea, it doesn't work so well in practice. First, it's a bit crap if your mouse is in less than pristine condition, and nor does it work that well if you have a restricted amount of space in which to move it. Yes, you can adjust the sensitivity of the up and down movement for driving, chipping and putting independently, but it's still somewhat problematic – you can't adjust the amount of angle allowed, so before you know it you're hitting outrageous hooks without meaning to. If you can't get on with the system you can opt for a traditional three-click approach, but unfortunately, *PGA* and *Links* already do this far better.

The ball movement isn't that convincing either. Yes, it hangs in the air for a lengthy period of time and looks like it's moving into the distance, but for all their splendour, the course graphics still look somewhat two-dimensional, and the ball and graphics don't appear to be connected.

On the positive side, however, is the enormous



range of controls you have over the game you'll play. Anyone who's seen any of the other FPS games will know the attention to detail they bring to everything, and won't be surprised to learn that you can play every possible type of golf, from straight strokeplay and matchplay to all those weird and confusing Stableford systems, four-ball-better-ball and so on. Weather and course conditions are minutely adjustable and best of all, you can actually choose to play in hideous combinations of tartan trousers and checked shirts. This is the first game that has ever allowed you to dress like a genuine golfing prick, and as such it almost deserves a Recommended. But not quite.

Patrick McCarthy

Publisher: Sierra
Price: £TBA
Tel: 0118 920 9100

78

STAR COMMAND

So then. *Star Command*. Well, the storyline is absurdly hackneyed (it's set in the 'Zeta Galaxy', populated by a race of robotic dudes called 'Computrons', and the major bad guy is 'the elusive Ahkun Vek Warlord, Narvek'), but hey, we'll let that pass. *Star Command* itself is a fairly workmanlike real-time strategy game,

complete with a choice of four different 'sides' to play and of course, the ubiquitous multi-player option. Visually, it's somewhat reminiscent of the *Star Control* series. And, er... that's it really. Tum te tum te tum. La de dah de dah. Think I'm padding this out a tad? Well you see, the problem is that I've been allocated 150 words in which to accurately sum up *Star*



Star Command: it's sort of alright really, if that's your bag.

Command, although I'm confident I can manage it in far less: *Star Command* is like *Command & Conquer* in space, except not as good (although it does have 64 different types of ship). There. That should more or less tell you everything you need to know, doesn't it?

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: GT Interactive
Price: £TBA
Tel: 0171 258 3791

59

(Left) *Uncle Henry's Mindblower* certainly does blow. And how.

>YOU ARE STANDING *
IN AN OPEN FIELD WEST
OF A WHITE HOUSE...

YOU'LL always remember your
FIRST TIME UNDERGROUND.

Actual 360° views from the game.

A hand in a brown leather glove holds a glowing orange lantern. In the dark background, a blue face with white eyes and a single black tear is visible. The lantern's light illuminates the scene.

ZORK™

Grand Inquisitor

Since 1979, millions have fought for the love of magic in the Great Underground Empire of Zork. Now the Grand Inquisitor would love to see magic destroyed...and you totemized (a very bad thing).

Rock-eating Brogmoids, gondola rides through Hades, and a bored Dungeon Master who lives inside your lantern... It can only happen Underground.

Grand Opening, Winter 1997 WINDOWS® 95 CD-ROM

Budget ZONE

This month **Steve Hill** rounded up the best games in the MicroProse PowerPlus budget range for your delectation. They're all available for around £12.99 or less and represent excellent VFM. If you don't believe us, check out the demos on the second CD and try before you buy.



It might not look much, but *Civilization* is still one of the most compelling games ever released.

CIVILIZATION

Sid Meier's classic put 'God' games on the map, quite literally, and spawned a host of shoddy imitators. Of course, it has now been superseded by the exemplary *Civ II*, but as an introduction to in-depth world domination strategy gaming, it doesn't get much better. Taking the helm of a primitive society at the beginning of recorded history (circa 4000 years BC), the idea is to build an empire that will live long and prosper. In the process, you'll come up against the likes of Napoleon, Genghis Khan and Alexander The Great (a bit like Bill & Ted did). Play it once and you just won't stop.

Verdict: You are God and you rule the world. Seriously.
Price: £9.99

COLONIZATION

Sid Meier's interim game bridged the gap between *Civilization I* and *II*, and presumably kept his bank balance healthy in the black. Essentially a more in-depth version of *Civ I* with better graphics, the idea this time was to conquer America. Playing as either the English, French, Dutch or Spanish (the English then), you start with a crap ship and 1000 gold pieces with orders to conquer the New Land via the method of your choice. A turn-based affair, it's the kind of game that has you by

the balls within half an hour and then refuses to let you go.

Verdict: *Civilization*. *Colonization*. You decide.
Price: £9.99

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX

The 'Daddy' of all racing games, Geoff Crammond's *F1GP* went for the serious simulation approach with great success, and it's still regarded as a benchmark title. It might have taken on a slightly aged look, with every car and team now being out of date, but *F1GP* accurately captures the thrill of the race and boasts a realistic AI and accurately drawn tracks. All manner of detail is covered, car set-up is as important

as putting in consistent lap times and you'll have to learn each circuit if you want to start anywhere near the front of the grid. The graphics may suffer in comparison to those of its sequel, but *F1GP* is a timeless classic.

Verdict: You'll find everything but Murray Walker here.
Price: £9.99

F14 FLEET DEFENDER

When it was originally released, *F14* was criticised for being too processor-intensive for the average user, with only those boasting fancy high-end 486s being able to play it with any success. Of course, that was then and this is now, and *Fleet Defender* should run smoothly on even the most modest Pentiums. As the title may suggest, the game involves piloting an F14 and defending your fleet. There's plenty of mission variation, with the action taking place above the icy North Cape and the warm Mediterranean, and opponents ranging from Bear bombers to Flanker fighters, so you'll have to adopt different tactics to cope. At the end of the day, you fly around, shoot things, and then try landing on a moving ship. In the dark.

Verdict: You get to fly planes and everything.
Price: £12.99



If you're going to buy *Grand Prix Manager*, make sure you get the patches of this month's Hot Wire CD or things could get messy.

GRAND PRIX MANAGER

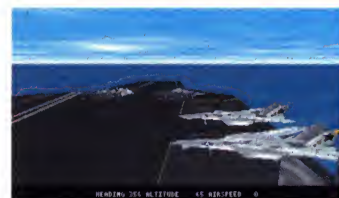
For those who like to watch, *Grand Prix Manager* removed the player from behind the wheel and put him in charge of team affairs, effectively making you the Frank Williams of the PC world. As you'd expect, all manner of technical considerations have to be taken on board, with research and design playing a major part in where your team ends up on the grid. Finance is also crucial, with sponsorship deals to be sorted and various staff to be hired and fired. Eventually the best team, driver and car can be acquired and the action viewed in as much detail as desired, followed by the inevitable ostentatious champagne spraying.

Verdict: For people who can't drive.
Price: £12.99

TOP GUN

We know that all film licences tend to be a bit on the dull side, especially when they're stuffed to the limit

(Left) Graphically, it may look a little dated, but apart from that, *F1GP* is still awesome. (Below) Fly into the danger zone in *Top Gun*.



with gratuitous FMV. Thankfully, the developers resisted the temptation to re-make the movie and tack some code on the end, and instead created the first game to use FMV intelligently without imposing on the in-game action. The budget doesn't stretch to Tom and Kelly of course, but after each mission you'll get a roasting from that follicly-challenged hardman if you mess up, and short clips between missions. It might not be as intense as *Falcon* or the *Jane's* simulations, but it's easy to get into, looks nice and is very playable. Just make sure that you turn the sound down when the Kenny Loggins track kicks in on the intro.

Verdict: Makes a better game than film.

Price: £12.99

TRANSPORT TYCOON

Trains, planes, automobiles, buses, all that lot. The sequel to the much-fancied *Railroad Tycoon*, this one diversified as it included all manner of vehicular activity. The obvious reference point is



Anyone in a red jumper is quite obviously going to suffer.

of course *SimCity 2000*, although many seasoned strategy observers claim it knocks Maxis' classic into a cocked hat, whatever that is. Faced with a vast, barren landscape, the idea is to build a traffic network and make millions of pounds. As with many sim games, the concept sounds tedious, but it's an extremely addictive game that will piss away hours of your life.

Verdict: Mussolini would love it.

Price: £9.99

X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP

The aliens are back, and this time they're underwater. The sequel to the highly rated *UFO: Enemy Unknown*, *X-COM* followed pretty much the same form, albeit with weapons more suited to a sub-aquatic environment. A cunning blend of resource management and tactical combat, no one has really



come close to combining the two factors with such addictive style. Be warned. This game can end relationships. A fact that Dep Ed Chris Anderson will happily share with anyone while under the influence of alcohol.

Verdict: Kill aliens under the sea. Cool.

Price: £12.99

STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION: A FINAL UNITY

A point-and-click adventure that saw pointy ears replaced by bald heads, *A Final Unity* had *Star Trek* fans drooling as the new lot finally got the chance to make their interactive bow. Cornish pasties mounted on foreheads, kecks tucked into Chelsea boots, and the all-new Enterprise accurately replicated for your gaming pleasure.



Patrick Stewart, Brent Spiner, Marina Sirtis et al were lured into lending their vocal talents to the project, and the game designers worked closely with Paramount to make it just so. All the personalities are faithful to the series and there's enough adventure to make the average Trekker wet his shiny suit.

Verdict: It's *Star Trek*, and it's living in your PC.

Price: £12.99

1944: ACROSS THE RHINE

It's war! With tanks! Coming with one of the biggest manuals in the history of gaming, *Across The Rhine* is scary for all but the most enthusiastic of tank fans. With a fairly comprehensive interface and a massive campaign mode that's as about realistic as you can get, it may be heavy going and a little inaccessible, but persevere and you'll find a very in-depth strategy game. As well as point-and-click

deployment, there's a first-person perspective that gives you a tank's eye view of the action, so you can opt to see how the battle is going from different levels and a mass of info covering just about everything you wanted to know about this period of the war. **Z**

Verdict: Heavy going for heavyweights.

Price: £9.99

Get the trains running on time in *Transport Tycoon* (above left) and save mankind in the classic strategy-fest that is *X-COM* (left).



The ultimate war machine. COME HELL AND HIGH WATER.



GT Interactive Software (Europe) Ltd.
The Old Grammar School,
248 Marylebone Road,
London, NW1 6JT
<http://www.gtinteractive.com>



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Tech ZONE

Windows 95 to run new arcade machines

Microsoft and Intel are preparing to take on arcade giants Namco and Sega with their own arcade machine. This could mean that Joe Public will finally experience network Quake first-hand. We look at the implications behind this announcement.



Microsoft have teamed up with Intel to produce an arcade machine harnessing the incredible power of Intel's new Pentium 2 processor and the flexibility of Microsoft's Windows 95 operating system. Both parties are hoping the new machine will quickly gain the support of games publishers everywhere, thus making them big players in the arcade industry overnight. The machine will feature at least a 233MHz microprocessor (the entry-level Pentium 2 processor), 32Mb RAM, and a new version of the 3Dfx chipset, so expect any games for

the machine to be graphically stunning.

If Microsoft and Intel's initiative proves popular with software publishers, you can reasonably expect to see arcades playing host to network Quake tournaments and several other multi-player games. Whether PC games for the system will



Plane Crazy will be the first W95 arcade game.

be written specifically for the arcades, or simply conversions of existing PC games, remains to be seen, but you can be sure we'll be keeping you up to date with developments on this exciting project as new information reaches us. Either way, it looks as though console owners and arcade addicts are finally set to find out why the PC is the greatest games machine in the universe. Smart!

Chris Anderson

Multimedia Magic?



THE MULTIMEDIA MAGIC remote controller allows you to control your PCTV card from a distance

(presumably for people who don't have TVs) or access your voice modem at a touch of a button. Or if you're really lazy you can even adjust the volume of your CD player with this handy little device (presumably for people who don't have CD players). We don't quite see the point in a controller which is effectively asking you to replace your household items with a pile of PC hardware cards just so you can use the thing, but if you're the sort of person who insists on having every little gadget available for the PC, you can buy the controller for a paltry £34.95. For more info call SS&M on 01625 539494.



With the Multimedia Magic remote controller you can make your PC do lots of things while you're walking around your front room. Exactly why you would want to do such a thing is more of a mystery, however.

Motor mouse

ARE YOU BORED OF USING A MOUSE THAT DOESN'T LOOK EVEN vaguely rodent-like? Does Microsoft's 'functional' but drab mouse design send you to sleep? If so, take a look at this fantastic motor car/mouse thing from JM interactive. We've only got a photo of it at the moment, but check out next month's Tech Zone for a full-on review of the Hot Wheels Mouse, which is sure to become an absolute sensation across the globe. Alternatively, if you can't wait that long you can phone JMI on 01703 650759 for more info.



Cheap and nasty

THE MULTIMEDIA KEYBOARD IS BASICALLY A CHEAP THAI import with some rather pissy-sounding speakers stuck on it. The impressive-sounding SRS 3D Sound Technology button doesn't bring very convincing "true-to-life, three-dimensional sound" to your games as promised in the manual. It just seems to make a nasty little noise a bit louder. The keyboard does have a microphone built-in, though – which is nice. The speaker volume control is also within easy reach and is equally vulnerable to having Irn-Bru spilt all over it. For the same money (£74.99) you can buy a really good keyboard, some decent speakers and still have £20 change. For more info call LSL Multimedia on 0800 9800575.

Simon Edwards

Round of applause

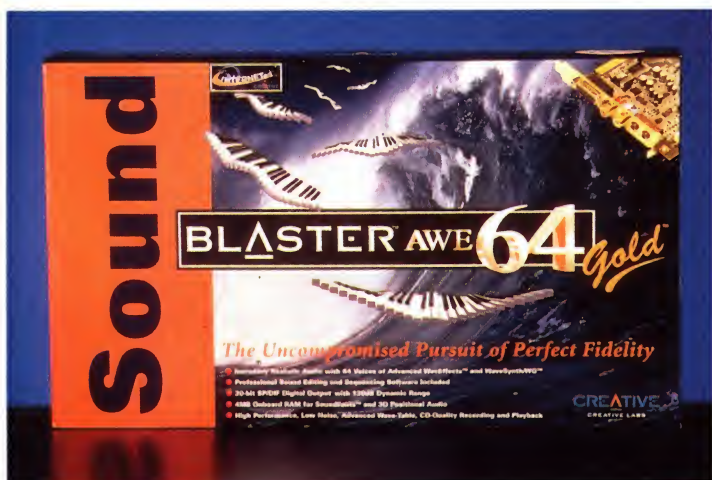
TEAC's new 25-speed CD-ROM drive has just arrived in the office to much applause from the *Zone* staff. The days of installing as much of a game as possible to your hard drive to improve performance are over, as this TEAC drive is so fast you can run many games straight off the CD, making for smaller installations and saving hard disk space. This alone makes it worth the hassle of playing with cables and drivers, and it's certainly worth the asking price of £99. Buy one now. For more info contact Powermark on 0181 956 7777.



Music maestro

CREATIVE LABS have upgraded their range of sound cards with two new models – the AWE64 Value and the AWE64 Gold. The Gold version is strictly for precious musicians who need digital outputs, gold connections and weak, noise-free speaker outputs. Games players will find the AWE64 Value a much more appropriate card. When playing background music to games, the AWE64 Value is as good as the AWE64 Gold and the older AWE32. Because it is a wavetable

card it is also much better than a regular SoundBlaster 16 or similar. If you are currently suffering the ZX Spectrum standard of music afforded by a plebeian, non-wavetable sound card, then buy an AWE64. Explosions and other digital sound effects will not be improved, but music will sound infinitely better. However, if you already own a wavetable card like the AWE32, or you always turn the music off in games, you can save your money. The AWE64 Value costs £79.99 and the AWE64 Gold is £159. For details call Creative Labs on 01245 26565.



FORMULA Karts

THE HI-WAY CODE

Throw away the book.

FORMULA Karts

Coming soon on

SEGA PC **SEGA SATURN**

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Download the playable demo from our website www.sega-europe.com

PIPEX
DIAL 90

Dialing...



Connecting...



Connected



Disconnecting...



Disconnected

ZONE On-Line

E3 looms

This month in *On-Line*: Britain Against The World (*Quake* style), how to be a stuck-up Squadron Leader without having to go to Cranwell, and more shameful marketing from the world of On-Line gaming.

MY GOSHY GOSH. IF IT ISN'T A HUGE AMERICAN games trade show looming on the horizon. It's E3 – no idea why it's called that (perhaps that's what you have to take in order to survive it). It's in Atlanta. And among the plastic, and the noise, and the fat, suited Americans picking hour-old french fries from between their teeth, the Software Industry will be showing off foetal-versions of their (hopeful) Christmas megahits.



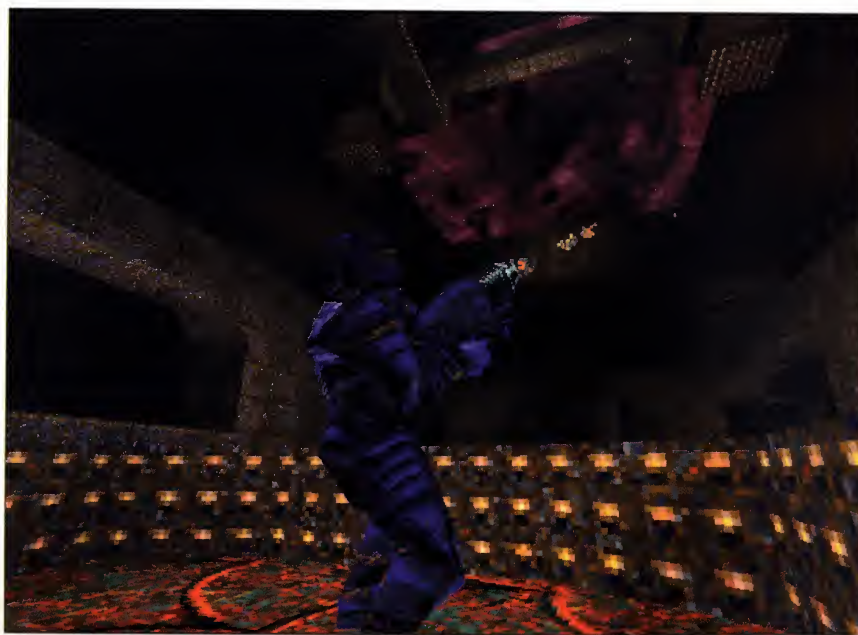
The genre on everyone's lips is the 3D shoot 'em up. The feature on everyone's list is multi-player network gameplay. So, expect E3 to be a showdown between Unified *Quake* Engine and an alliance of the rest. On one side, *Quake II*, *Daikatana*, *Hexen II*, *Duke Nukem Forever*, and *Sin*. On the other, *Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight*, *Unreal*, *Prey*, and *Star Trek: First Contact*. Yours truly will be there, Logitech mouseman and CFG file in hand. This will be a sunny on-line gaming holiday for me. For once, I'll have a chance to kick some leathery American butt without having to fight with a 700ms ping.

We'll have a full report on these sweaty wrestling matches next issue, plus news of the showdown between the "best *Quake* players in the world" (their words, not mine) as they fight for the ultimate prize: John Carmack's Yellow Ferrari Testarossa. Most, as they say, impressive.

David McCandless



We'll be finding out more about *Quake 2* (left) next month. So keep 'em peeled.



LE TOURNOI DE QUAKE

"I'm good at *Quake*," shouted **Petoir**. "Not good enough to play for England!" came the reply. And while you might have a quick kickaround after work, you'd never dream of taking on a premiership side at the weekend, would you? Petoir went on-line with the first UK *Quake* team as they launch their challenge against the world.



"IT'S COMING HOME, IT'S COMING home, it's coming... *Quake* is coming home. Three gibbs on your shirt..." A new anthem? I think so! You can keep your footy

tournaments – the UK is taking on the global *Quake*-playing community through the wonders of *QuakeWorld* technology. The incredible backbone of *Quake* information resources and news Web pages on the Net have now developed into a truly global community.

Much of the news and gossip relating to *Quake* is shared and spread across the hundreds of *Quake* Web pages (more about these later) across the US and Europe. Through these sites many of the greatest *Quake* players got word of the best players in the world from their respective

countries – and egos were primed ready to undertake the battle of a lifetime.

The UK has always had a real hard-core of overly skilful players regardless of the game that is currently in vogue. Well, there's no doubting *Quake*'s domination in the on-line community at the moment, and where better to prove your worth and talents than in an on-line arena? But how do you go about getting a team together good enough to take on the world?

One-on-one games became the answer – there is nowhere better to hone your skills than within a one-on-one gibfest arena. Regular *Quake* fiend Arathanar is responsible for the patch and the most excellent bandwidth power of Cambridge University – the balls behind the server. The Crystal one-on-one servers have become the training



Check out the smart England kit. And the players swap skins after the match...



Looking down the wrong end of a Swedish gun barrel. Bang-bang! You're dead.

ground for many *Quake* soldiers itching to take the mantle of the best individual UK player. Eventual promotion to the UK team is on the cards. The try-outs were played, the players were picked and the first games arranged. Here we go...

Game 1: UK Vs Sweden Lambs to the slaughter

PING	TIME	FRAGS	TEAM	NAME
30	29	96	UK	ETTU
41	29	80	UK	SUJOY
41	29	79	UK	CENOBITE
54	29	79	UK	QUICKSILVER
77	29	68	UK	LORDSTORM
75	29	68	UK	DIBBLER
71	29	63	UK	NIGHTWING
50	29	64	UK	J'HONI-BO
39	29	62	UK	ADZE
47	29	61	UK	CHROMATIC
70	29	59	SWE	ANGEL
52	29	45	UK	CRYSTALPIDS
69	29	77	UK	DRAGONTUNG
80	29	66	UK	FLYINGBIRD
107	29	59	SWE	SANDBMAN
51	29	54	UK	ARATHRANAR-UK
64	29	52	SWE	EVILDEAD
72	29	52	SWE	SHUGUN
60	29	52	SWE	CHAME
79	29	54	UK	RAWMEAT
65	29	52	SWE	NATOR
67	27	52	SWE	BOEMMOR
67	29	52	SWE	JESPER
100	29	52	SWE	MCCOY
68	29	52	SWE	EL-LOCO
102	29	52	SWE	STORM
68	27	52	SWE	PARALYZER
100	29	52	SWE	BOSSMAN
100	29	52	SWE	JEEBSTER
(SPECTATOR)			SWE	CC-ANGEL
(SPECTATOR)			SWE	EVILDEAD

A total wipeout in favour of the UK, on the Swedish server and on home turf. A fairly clean game (apart from the buckets of gibbs, of course) and the Swedes were forced to wait for the re-match. Back to the kitchen to throw wooden spoons at chickens methinks.



Game 2: UK Vs Sweden (Re-match) Swedish Chef ruins re-match

PING	TIME	FRAGS	TEAM	NAME
42	30	66	UK	ETTU
50	30	54	UK	CENOBITE
70	30	42	SWE	NEEDKILLER
45	30	42	UK	SUJOY
75	30	42	SWE	JESPER
40	30	42	UK	QUICKSILVER
59	30	42	UK	STORM
46	30	42	UK	ADZE
42	30	42	UK	NIGHTWING
63	30	42	UK	DFRO
101	30	42	SWE	DE-DALTON
61	30	42	UK	DIBBLER
73	30	42	SWE	MAG
91	30	42	SWE	MR-DING
74	30	42	SWE	BOEMMOR
74	30	42	SWE	ANGEL
67	30	42	UK	SHUGUN
101	30	42	SWE	LOKK
74	30	42	SWE	GENRAL-SHUGUN
157	30	42	SWE	JEEBSTER
82	30	42	UK	DRAGONTUNG
151	30	42	SWE	GRON
84	30	42	SWE	EL-LOCO
79	30	42	SWE	GOTICK
93	30	42	SWE	CUTTER
43	30	42	UK	ARATHRANAR
79	30	42	UK	ALAMO
53	15	0	UK	RAWMEAT
79	30	42	SWE	AMERITION
60	18	16	UK	FLYINGBIRD
(SPECTATOR)			SWE	EVILDEAD

two of your strongest mid-fielders sent off. We lost, but it was under dubious circumstances. Honest.

The Swedes have since retired for the summer. As yet the

BIG THANKS TO... the following guys... and a word of warning. If you're new to *Quake* and you fancy playing on-line, do yourself a favour and steer clear of any servers with the following players on them:

CC-Angel, Sujoy Roy (if anyone beats him one-on-one DM4 over the next two months I'll eat my *Doom 2* hat and take photos to prove it), Arathranar, Nightwing, all the CC chaps and all members of the following clans: Quake Lords, Quake Police Dept, TG, DoM, Clan Pendragon, Demonic Core, and The Desperados.

THE TEAM

ANGEL

Name: Femi Lana
Clan: Clan Corpus

J'HONI-BO

Name: Matthew Beal
Clan: Frag Kings

ARATHRANAR

Name: Adrian Garside
Clan: Clan Pendragon

LORDSTORM

Name: Jaime Gorman
Clan: QuakeLords

CENOBITE

Name: Andrew Bell
Clan: QuakeLords

NIGHTWING

Name: Jon Askew
Clan: Demonic Core

DANMAN

Name: Dani Arrussi
Clan: Quake Police Dept.

PYRO

Name: Mark Toller
Clan: Clan Corpus

DIBBLER

Name: Rob Tansley
Clan: Clan Corpus

QUICKSILVER

Name: Jude Insley
Clan: Clan Corpus

DRAGONTUNG

Name: Tung Phuc Mac
Clan: QuakeLords

RAWMEAT

Name: Dominic O'Rearden
Clan: Clan Corpus

ETTU

Name: Douglas Hart
Clan: QuakeLords

SHMERM

Name: Darren Henderson
Clan: QuakeLords

EXTREAM

Name: Paul Ryder
Clan: The X (Leader)

SUJOY

Name: Sujoy Roy
Clan: Demonic Core

German team have not responded to the challenge, Finland play some bizarre deathmatch set-up and the Americans don't like QuakeWorld. Sounds to me like they're running scared. More news as it develops.

Quake Olympics

This whole story may seem like a quaint tale of a few hard-core *Quake* players with nothing better to do on mid-week nights than get together on-line, and frag into the early hours. Well think again! *Quake* is not only changing the way in which

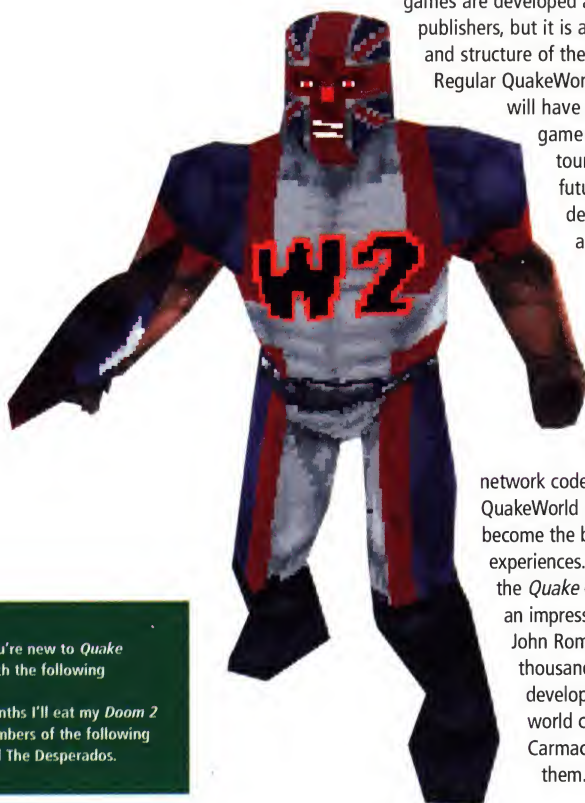
games are developed and eventually sold on to major publishers, but it is also changing the very fabric and structure of the on-line game-playing public.

Regular QuakeWorld players are the people who will have the final say on how on-line game experiences, communities and tournaments will develop in the future. These guys are shaping the development of on-line gaming as an international sport.

John Carmack's open-minded and modular approach to the design of *Quake* has led to what can only be described as an on-line gaming revolution.

Although many see *Quake* as an impressive 3D first-person shooter with solid and stable

network code, the UK team and all the regular QuakeWorld players have made sure that it will become the backbone of future on-line gaming experiences. And it doesn't stop at *Quake* – the *Quake* engine has already been licensed an impressive six times to date. To quote John Romero: "For a couple of hundred thousand dollars every development team in the world could have John Carmack working for them." Say no more!



FROM THE FRONT

A hot new section starring a regular personal report from the on-line gaming frontier.

WarBirds

Stuart Andrews ends up as cannon fodder for almost every other person playing *WarBirds*.



THERE ARE BASICALLY TWO SORTS OF WORLD War II flight sim. One is all about action – getting up there, sticking it to the enemy and returning to the soft soil of Blighty. The other goes after realism: accurate physics, historical flight models, and tactical, manoeuvre-based dogfights. On-line flight sim *WarBirds* fits into the latter category and it can be a bewildering experience.

Proceed with caution

Novice players should try playing off-line before connecting. There are two good reasons. Firstly, it'll help you get used to the graphics, which could be described as pretty as Coventry, ie, bollock ugly. Once you've escaped the feeling that time has warped back to the days before Gouraud shading and texture mapping, you can get used to the flight controls. Quite frankly, the planes fly like bastards. Unresponsive one minute, then viciously power diving the next, they're a real handful. When I first started playing on-line all I could do was run headfirst into buildings, or take off AND then spin-dive into the ground from a meagre height of 200ft. Neither made for satisfactory gameplay. The help file revealed that my joystick wasn't bugged; I simply wasn't countering the effects of Torque, and I was advised to fly a P38 twin-engine craft from the large selection. I did so, entered the practice arena, and made my first take-off.

The flight didn't last long. Within seconds some bastard

LOGGING ON

Strangely, getting on-line was one of the easiest things in the game. If your ISP uses a 32-bit Winsock, you can connect up directly. You simply run the *WarBirds* set-up menu, enter your account name and password, then set it up to run under Network or PPP/SLIP. As I'm all fitted up with the latest 32-bit dial-up-what-have-you, I just connected up to my ISP and then ran the *WarBirds* Online program. Some ISPs might not use a 32-bit Winsock (Pipex, for instance, use 16-bit in their own software), in which case you'll have to follow the manual's instructions and start the game using dial-up networking.

Hopefully, you won't have to face the wait I then encountered while *WarBirds* upgraded my version to the latest release on-line. I was informed that this would take "over ten minutes". It did; around 30 to be precise. Internet play always costs – but before you start playing?



noticed I was in need of practice, and proceeded to give me lessons in taking off under fire. Over the next 20 minutes my helpful friends in the practice arena gave me plenty more lessons. I practised taking off. I practised hammering the eject button. I practised trying to ram other craft on the runway in a desperate attempt to get a kill...

Up and at 'em

Having had enough practice I decided to join the most highly populated battle arena, aiding my unwitting red teammates against the evil green and purple forces. There is a certain camaraderie about, judging by the conversations going on between my fellow players. They covered each other's tails, they commented on daring manoeuvres, they commiserated, congratulated and occasionally bickered. Myself, I felt like a character in a World War II flying corps movie; the guy who's just mentioned his oncoming leave to marry his childhood sweetheart just before the squadron takes off, the guy who's marked for doom. I tried my best to find combat, and became the first victim every time. Getting satisfaction from *WarBirds* takes time and practice, and it's hard to practise when all the air combat experience you get is on the receiving end of someone's machine gun.

It's a bit hard

I did get better, but not much. If you're a dyed in the wool propeller head who's already notched up cumulative weeks of flying time on the more realistic WWII simulators, *WarBirds* presents a challenging and rewarding interactive world, albeit not a very attractive one. Like Deathmatch *Quake* or on-line *Diablo*, it gives back whatever you put in. For most of us, however, there's not enough there for the beginner to encourage you to develop your skills.



Product details

Game: WarBirds
Version: 1.11
Publisher: Interactive Magic
Max no of players: 140 per arena
Server: US
Price: \$2 per hour (first five hours free)
Website: www.imagicgames.com



(Above) Okay, so we said we wouldn't keep going on about the graphics, but they aren't that bad if you squint at the screen and turn the contrast way down low.

PROS

No major latency problems
Loads of people on-line
Plenty of aircraft to fly

CONS

Difficult for beginners
Basic graphics
Large update downloads

On-Line News & Gossip

The page with its finger on the pulse of on-line gaming

Journey to another planet

WEBRPG IS AN EXTENSIVE WEBSITE DEDICATED to the much scoffed-at genre of role-playing games, and is chock-full of exciting goodies for the Parkered peeps who find this sort of thing enjoyable. The operators claim the site has over 7000 visitors each and every week, although they fail to say exactly how many of these people sport

beards, yellow finger nails and live in mid-west USA. But that's probably a good thing.

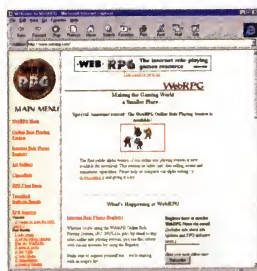
There's an on-line art gallery, plus all the latest tidings from the fur-lined world of RPGs. There are also over 100 discussion forums where the sort of people who answer the door when the phone rings take it in turns to sound peculiar. Here's a taster:

"Roll to see if you step off the sidewalk successfully. Yikes, an 18 – that's a fumble. Roll on the fumble table. A 97 – that means you broke BOTH your ankles. Take 12, 15, 17 points of damage, and roll to see if any of your magic items broke. Aargh! Your wand of fireballs broke! It had 12 charges left, so that means 107 points of damage..."

Excuse me while I sew my head to the floor and beat my familiar with a large haddock.

WebRPG is at <http://www.webrpg.com>.

Hey, don't laugh. id Software got half their ideas from role-playing games – or so the saying goes.



www.cool_site_to_visit.com

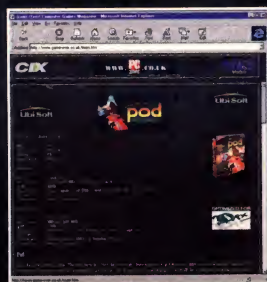
<http://www.game-over.co.uk>

Want a prize-winning Website? Think pants – an attitude echoed by the line-up of anorexic finalists in this year's Yell Web Awards, where judges again look set to decree that style is more important than content. The more objective among us will of course know that the hottest spots are those which provide useful, regularly updated information – in other words, any Website that has you coming back for more.

With that in mind, let me introduce *Game-Over*, a site that wasn't nominated for a Yell Award. Sure it's no catwalk beauty, but it is plump with news, reviews, tips and chatter from the world of PC games.

The latest issue sees the site securing rights to *Voodoo Review*, a newsletter that waxes lyrical about all the latest goings-on in the Voodoo chipset gaming world – worth a butcher's for that alone. Advertising is deliberately low-key, the competitions are actually worth entering, there are dozens of juicy screenshots, and the reviewers are all proficient and seemingly impartial.

If you're looking for a busy and independent games site, look no further.



Game-Over: Reviews are in-depth and friendly.

PC Zone on AOL

AS YOU READ THIS, PC ZONE HAS FURTHERED ITS attempt at on-line World Domination. Not only is our critically acclaimed (by us) Website going down a storm, but now we're heating up the world of AOL, too.

The official AOL PC Zone area has been launched and includes everything from an extensive reviews database to up-to-the-minute news,

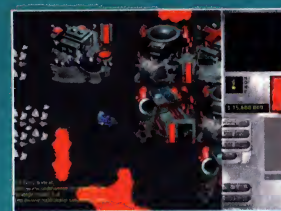
plus innovative on-line features such as message forums and real-time chat sessions. We'll even be bringing you top names from the games industry, ready to face a live grilling from your good selves.

Simply log on and enter the Games section (keyword: PC Zone) of AOL and you'll be transported to a world of happy gaming fun joy like no other. Ahh...

The latest version of AOL's software can be obtained by ringing 0800 2791234.



Game on at E-On



ENTERTAINMENT Online, Hermann Hauser's Web-based games service, is looking more enticing than ever after receiving a cash boost from its

London-based investors. The company is now expanding into international markets and increasing its line-up of interactive games.

BattleCity is E-On's latest real-time strategy thing set in a world where cities exist only to kick shit out of each other. The plot sees you as Mayor building a vast municipality of factories and assorted weaponry, popping out every so often to get a pint of milk, take the odd library book back, and slaughter your neighbours.

The game also gives you the option of becoming a Commando, so if you think being Mayor isn't butch enough, you can always try the Sly Stallone alternative.

Check out E-On at <http://www.e-on.co.uk>.

Got an on-line game you wanna tell us about? Send all ideas and defamation to pczone@wahey.demon.co.uk with the message line: "ONLINE GAMES" and we'll tell the world about it.

Advantage Wireplay

The benefits of BT's games network are obvious: the service is unique, it doesn't require an Internet connection, there are no subscription charges, and all you pay is the cost of the call – 2.5p per minute at evenings and weekends. The downside is that while everyone's heard of Wireplay, nobody seems to understand or use it.

This situation will no doubt change as British Telecom opens the throttle on its all-conquering (and intensely annoying) marketing machine. Latest news is that the Wireplay client and *EF2000* Wireplay Edition will be distributed with new AST PCs: the Advantage! 7409, 9401, 9405 and 9409. AST's own research showed that 36 per cent of all home PCs are used primarily for games, so the bundle deal with BT can only help to boost sales.

Wireplay software is available free at <http://www.wireplay.com>, or call 0800 800918 and ask nicely for it.

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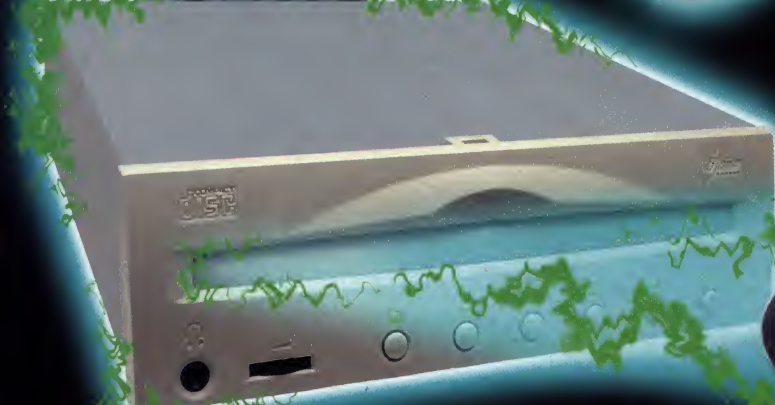
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Can you m

There are loads of football management games out there, all claiming the title of the most accurate.

Patrick McCarthy played all the big ones, and compared them to this season's real Premiership to see who came out top.

A

NYONE WHO'S PLAYED A FOOTBALL management game probably recognises this situation only too well: some know-all git who doesn't like football will always come along, stand behind you and start twitting on about "It's not real, you know." And "I don't know what all the fuss is about – it's only a spreadsheet..." (Forgetting that they've just spent three weeks playing Theme Hospital, or that, since computers are basically flash adding machines, all computer games are basically spreadsheets.) Let's start right in at this point and say that anyone who thinks that can just piss off. This feature is for people who believe.

Yes, all football management games look shit. Some have tried to look less shit than others by sticking in 'actual' game footage in the form of six or seven video highlights of one game in 1978. Others are now generating the matches in-game by using smaller versions of their arcade football games. But what most of them don't realise is that none of this matters. What people want in a football game isn't motion-captured players that are so detailed you can see which ones have waxed their legs for the big game – they want a feeling that they're taking part in an on-going football world, that tactical decisions and player purchases made will have a quantifiable effect on their success or failure in the game, and that they can do most of the things a manager can do in real life. With the exception perhaps of getting photographed in a jacuzzi with Miss Ongar, wearing more gold jewellery than Mister T and smoking a cigar. (All the women in Ongar smoke cigars.)

I fee-eel... so real

Football, it's said, is a game of opinions. This is bollocks. In my opinion... Oh, alright then, it is a subjective game. (You know who

Next season's average Middlesbrough gate.

you like, and you subject everyone else to a constant stream of abuse.) And whether you feel a Premiership table, as produced by one of these management games, is an accurate reflection of the teams' abilities can be dependent on that.

You only have to take a team like Spurs. In a management game, assuming the developers have done their work properly, you'll have a team with a handful of decent players in it. But you'll also have several certified morons who, if you were controlling the team, you'd dump like a canister of radioactive waste. In real life, of course, thanks to Gerry 'Workmanlike' Francis and his team of crack physiotherapists, they had a team of quadriplegics. Obviously, a computer game can't impose these injuries on you when you start a season, so where a team like this finishes in the league is one to argue about.

Money, money, money...

Then there's Middlesbrough. Critics gave Kevin Keegan a hard time at Newcastle for spending £56 billion on a football team and winning nothing. (They also gave him a hard time for his Four Tops haircut, but that's another matter.) Anyone, they said, could take a team to the top of the Premiership if they had £56 billion to spend. Then along came Brian Robson. He spent £56 billion and got relegated. At least he proved the critics wrong.

But where would you place Middlesbrough as a team on paper given the players they had? With the likes of Festa, Ravanelli, Emerson and Juninho, you'd feel a bit of a shithead not to get them into Europe. Success should be easy in a management game with this squad. After all, none of them yet take into



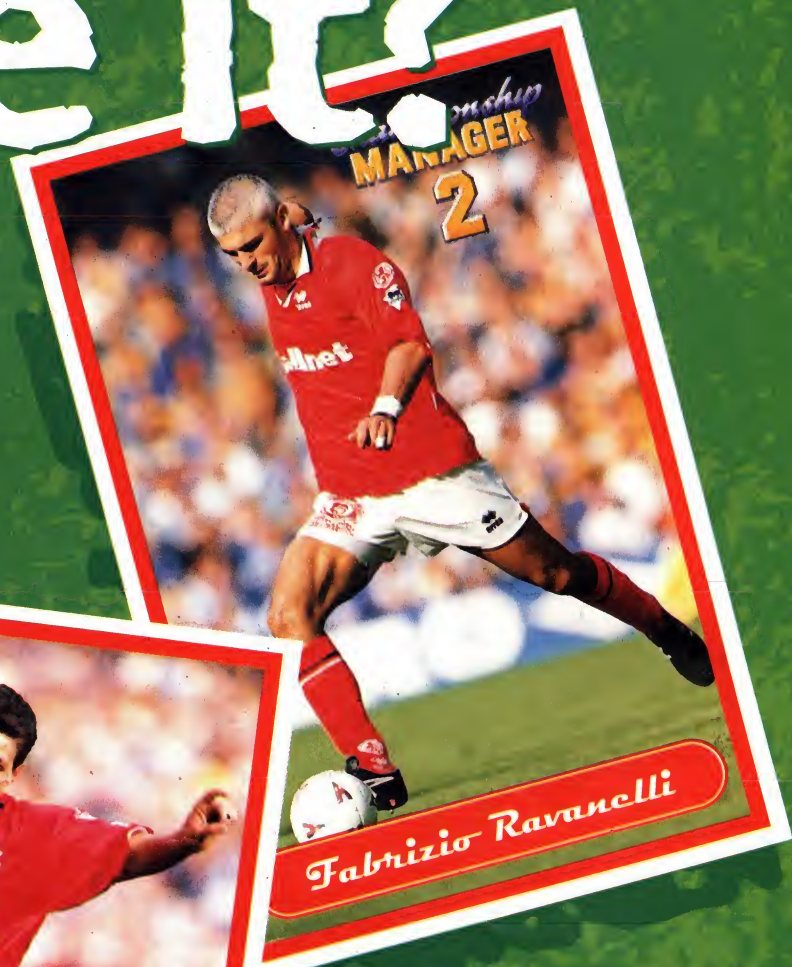
Messrs Robson and Juninho view conclusive proof that the Chesterfield shot crossed the line in the semi-final...

SPOOKY HAPPENINGS

One of the things that makes CM2 such a spookily accurate thing to play is the weird correlation between it and real life. The famous one is Neil Lennon, who was a big name in CM2 long before he was in reality. Most people have hundreds of weird coincidence stories to tell, such as players transferring to the same teams in so-called 'real-life' after they do it in CM2, but here are just a couple of specific incidents from the last time I played it... Robert Taylor of Brentford scored all five goals in his side's 5-0 victory this season; he did exactly the same thing for my Spurs side in CM2 – on the same day. Frank Clark got sacked by Nottingham Forest in CM2 – and joined Manchester City, a week before he joined them in real life. You can probably use it to make big money by predicting real-life events: next season, for example, Arsenal get relegated. Stick some money on now – you'll thank me later.



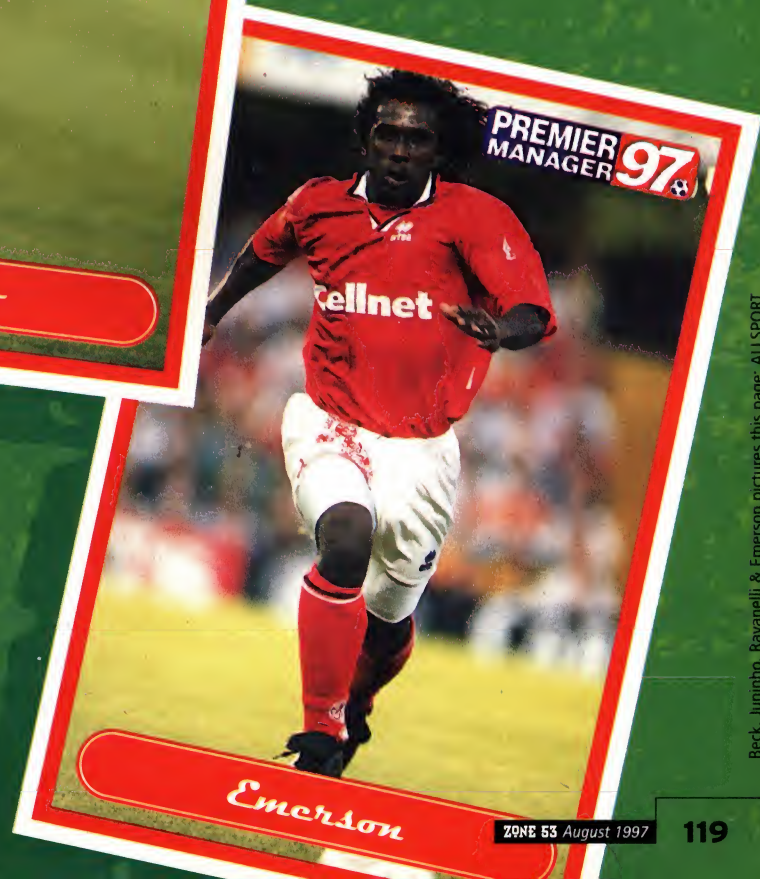
manage it?



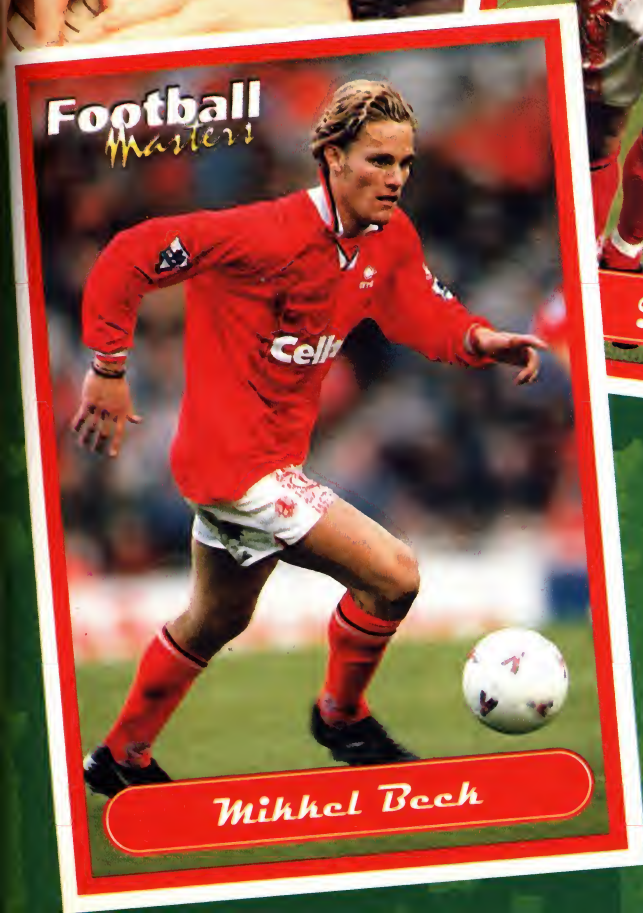
Fabrizio Ravanelli



Juninho



Emerson



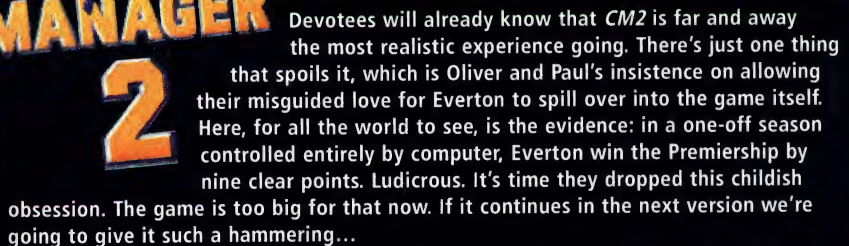
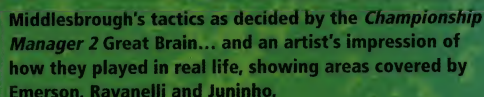
Mikkel Bech

Ooo-eee-oooo. *CM2* had its usual bunch of spooky coincidences. For example, Neil Cox got transferred (but to Aston Villa, as opposed to Derby). It's hard to tell whether he stuck one on Fabrizio before he left. Instead of real-life Branco, Robson signed

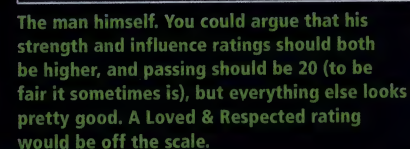
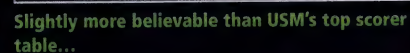
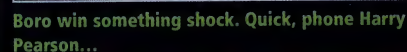
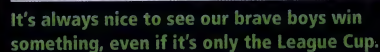
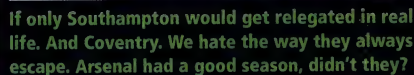
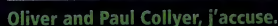
account the fact that your star foreign striker has been in a fight with a lesser light before the Cup Final, or that another big star believed that Middlesbrough was somewhere just off the King's Road and had a really nice beach. So we thought that, as well as looking

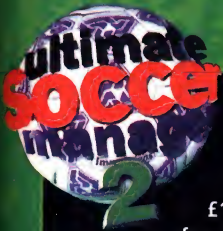
at the overall reality of the game, we'd focus a little bit on Middlesbrough as a kind of 'key' club.

To play the Premiership as a straight computer-controlled game, by the way, we had to interfere as little as possible with it. Which meant taking control of a lower-division side and keeping an eye on the Premiership results. Some games make this easier to do than others: you can start CM2 by choosing, say, Doncaster and resigning the same day – the whole league then runs on its own, players move about, campaigns are fought out, and you can check on any of it, at any point in the season, whenever you want. The fact that it does run itself makes it far and away the most realistic in these terms, of course. Other games are more problematic. In most, you can only look at other clubs' squads if they are your next opponents. If you're lucky, you may notice someone's been transferred, but have no way of finding out where to; you may see someone playing for a different club but have no way of knowing when they got there. In some games you can't even see the results of competitions you're not involved in, or if you miss it, there's no way of going back to check it out. With this in mind, don't get too pissed off if we can't show you exactly what happened and when, in the way we can with CM2. Just accept it, alright? And if you don't like our decisions as to what's an accurate reflection of the season and what isn't... boq off and do your own. (Z)



Anyway, Middlesbrough won the FA Cup, beating Manchester City 2-0. Spookily, they had as easy a ride through the tournament as they did in real life, beating the likes of Cambridge Utd, Watford, Reading and QPR to get there. Unlike in reality, Juninho missed the Final through injury, whereas Ravanelli played well and scored. If you were Brian Robson this

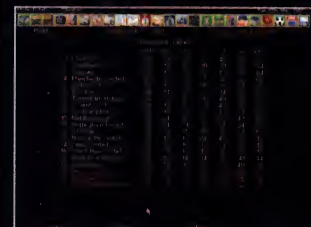




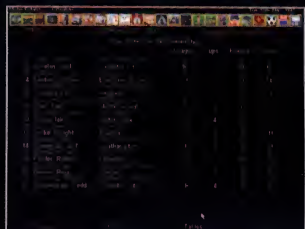
Things didn't start well for *USM2*, with both Gianfranco Zola and Alessandro del Piero on the transfer list on the first day of the season, at £1.8 and £1.7 million respectively. Let's face it, if del Piero's worth £1.7 million,

David Beckham's worth about £500K and they should be giving free Porsches away with six packets of cornflakes. (By the end of the season, Man Utd had sold Peter Schmeichel, which is about as likely as Alex Ferguson being generous in defeat.)

The whole season was, frankly, as bizarre as the transfer prices. Leading lights in the Premiership performance charts included the legendary Stig Tofting, who had the crowd in the palm of his hand in beautiful Newcastle. (Projected tabloid headline: "Stig Of The Dump.") Equally unlikely is the fact that Spurs signed Brian Laudrup, who is far too much like a good player for Gerry Francis to consider.



Liverpool winning the League? Shyeah, right.



Newcastle's Vialli (?) leads the goalscorers with a less-than-impressive 19 – but Noel Whelan leads the League with 16.



A bunch of nobodies, and Sol Campbell, dominate the Premiership performance charts.

The Premiership title race went to Liverpool, with Wimbledon second and a Zola-less Chelsea third. Arsenal did well, coming 12th. And the Premiership's leading scorer was Noel Whelan, with 16 (no doubt all scrambled over the line from a goalmouth ruckus).

REALITY QUOTIENT: 5

Liverpool winning it is viable, Blackburn struggling to survive is remarkable – but Coventry, Southampton and Everton finishing in the top half is a bit silly. The transfer market, while unrealistic price-wise, is still better than *PM97*'s – at least players refuse to drop several divisions.



Cups for Everton (snort) and Tottenham (cough) only add to a feeling that reality is slipping away.

Football Masters

As Jeremy pointed out in his recent review of the game, *FM* suffers from a lack of realism. So I wasn't surprised to see Roberto di Matteo (the man who won me £65 in the Cup Final, incidentally) up for sale on the first day of the season for £1.8 million.

As the season went on, Ian Woan was loaned by Nottingham Forest to Northampton Town, Graeme Le Saux transferred to Coventry for £1.3 million, Franck Le Boeuf went to West Ham, and Egil Ostenstadt moved to Grimsby. Players were all over the place, out of position and incorrectly selected. Oh, and Jean-Pierre Papin went to Notts County.

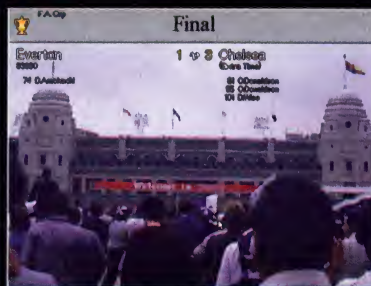
REALITY QUOTIENT: 4

All a bit random, really. The Premiership was completely weird, being won by Aston Villa, followed by Leeds, Chelsea, Nottingham Forest and Sheffield Wednesday. Leicester, Derby and... er, Tottenham were relegated... clearly absurd (cough). Blackburn beat Derby 4-1 in the Unlikely League Cup Final, but Chelsea won the FA Cup, which is worth mentioning.

Premier League Tables

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1 Liverpool	22	14	5	3	38	18	20	47
2 Newcastle Utd	22	12	6	4	30	20	10	42
3 Chelsea	22	11	7	4	28	22	6	39
4 Arsenal	22	11	6	5	27	21	6	39
5 Blackburn Rovers	22	10	7	5	25	20	5	37
6 Manchester Utd	22	10	6	6	24	22	2	36
7 Sheffield Utd	22	10	5	7	23	21	2	35
8 Sunderland	22	9	8	5	22	19	3	35
9 Tottenham	22	9	7	6	21	20	1	35
10 Derby County	22	8	9	5	20	18	2	33
11 Aston Villa	22	8	7	7	19	20	-1	31
12 Leicester	22	7	8	7	18	21	-3	29
13 Leeds Utd	22	7	7	8	17	20	-3	29
14 Nottingham F	22	6	9	7	16	21	-5	27
15 Coventry	22	6	8	8	15	22	-7	26
16 Southampton	22	5	9	8	14	23	-9	24
17 West Ham Utd	22	5	7	10	13	24	-11	22
18 Middlesbrough	22	4	8	10	12	25	-13	20
19 Wimbledon	22	4	7	11	11	26	-15	19
20 Everton	22	3	6	13	10	27	-17	15

The world's weirdest Premiership.



Well, they got that right... ish.

PREMIER MANAGER 97

PM97's one of the games where you have to click through the season for bloody hours. Unfortunately, it's also one where it's hard to view tables and results once they're more than a few hours old. And we accidentally got into the play-offs

with Gillingham. Unfortunately, the game insists that these take place before the end of the Premiership – which, of course, simply isn't the case in reality. But as a result, we can't show you the final Premiership standings, only the table with one game to go because as soon as the play-offs finish, you're taken on to the next season, and there's no way of seeing a final Premiership table. However, we can tell you that Liverpool won the league, with Newcastle in second place and Arsenal third. Again, Manchester United were nowhere to be seen. Although we can't get the details, Stan Collymore seemed to be dominating for Liverpool, in marked contrast to his self-obsessed performance in real life.

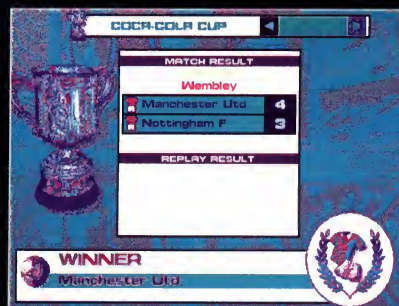
REALITY QUOTIENT: 6

The Premiership results will be gratifying news for all Man Utd haters, of course, but as far as realism goes... well, let's just say that at one point Tottenham and Arsenal were battling it out, five points clear of everyone else. And Sunderland were undefeated for the first 15 games.

The transfer market was more insane than *USM2*'s – on a whim, I tried to buy the odd player for Gillingham while clicking through the season, just to keep my spirits up. I got Andrei Kanchelskis on loan from Fiorentina.

PREMIER LEAGUE

POS	TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
1	Liverpool	22	14	5	3	38	18	47
2	Newcastle Utd	22	12	6	4	30	20	42
3	Chelsea	22	11	7	4	28	22	39
4	Arsenal	22	11	6	5	27	21	39
5	Blackburn Rovers	22	10	7	5	25	20	37
6	Manchester Utd	22	10	6	6	24	22	36
7	Sheffield Utd	22	10	5	7	23	21	35
8	Sunderland	22	9	8	5	22	19	35
9	Tottenham	22	9	7	6	21	20	35
10	Derby County	22	8	9	5	20	18	33
11	Aston Villa	22	8	7	7	19	20	31
12	Leicester	22	7	8	7	18	21	29
13	Leeds Utd	22	7	7	8	17	20	29
14	Nottingham F	22	6	9	7	16	21	27
15	Coventry	22	6	8	8	15	22	26
16	Southampton	22	5	9	8	14	23	24
17	West Ham Utd	22	5	7	10	13	24	22
18	Middlesbrough	22	4	8	10	12	25	20
19	Wimbledon	22	4	7	11	11	26	19
20	Everton	22	3	6	13	10	27	15



(Top) The Premier League according to *Premier Manager 97*. Not as wildly inaccurate as the transfers might have led us to believe and (of course) immensely satisfying for Man Utd haters – ie around 98 per cent of the planet. And Everton get relegated. Is this a gesture aimed at Olly and Paul or completely accidental? Maybe we'll know the truth once we see Sheffield Utd relegated in *CM2.5*. (Above) Manchester United win another trophy. (After being awarded seven penalties and getting 12 minutes of 'stoppage time'.)

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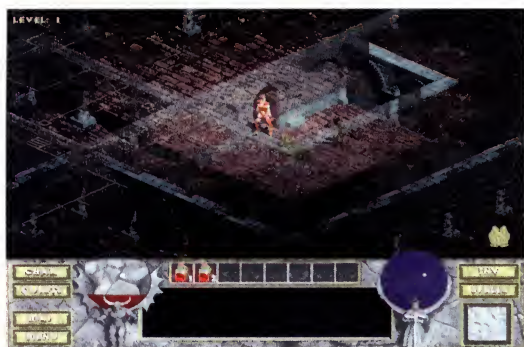
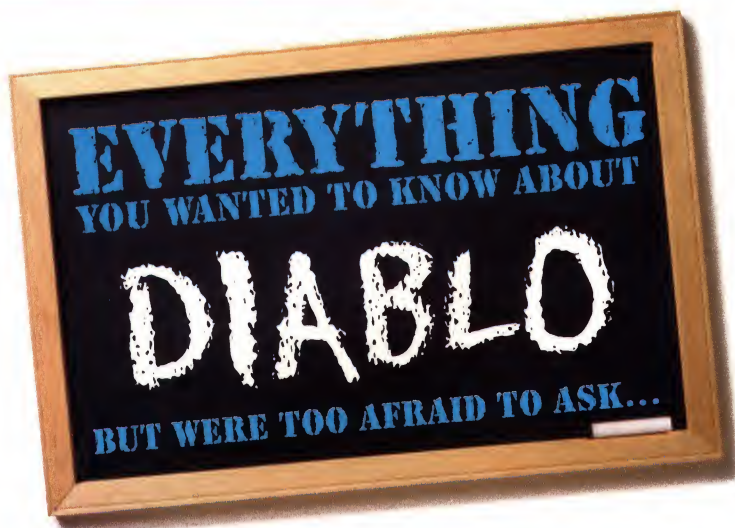


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Killing monsters

Experienced players are bound to have discovered this first tip, but new users need to get to grips with it very quickly. Basically, just remember that only one stupid monstie can ever move through a doorway at one time, so all you have to do is attract the attention of a load of bad guys, and as they move towards you, run towards a doorway. Once there, stand on one side so that you can whack them all without being hit yourself.



Standing still to hit stuff

This is especially useful for the above 'Killing Monsters' tip. It's worth remembering that you're fighting with swords and axes and stuff, so you need to keep your back covered – if you can't get in a clear doorway, back yourself into a corner. To make sure that your hero doesn't move as he hacks and slashes, hold down the shift key to keep him fixed to the spot.

If you're playing a warrior, you're going to need to charge up your firewall spell.

Killing the Butcher

Early in the game you'll have a lot of trouble wiping out the Butcher. So here's a cunning little cheatette that you can apply if you're feeling lazy.

Before you enter his room, find the exit to the next level. Go back to the Butcher, get him out of his room and make him follow you to the

As you venture into hell, it's worth having a few tricks up your sleeve. John Davison, who wasted more than a few weeks doing nothing but play *Diablo*, divulges some important survival tips.



Make use of hotkeys!

Early on you'll find that you can point and click at everything to make things happen, and as you progress you're going to need to use the keyboard or you won't be able to react quickly enough. Place mana and health potions on your belt when you go into big punch-ups, so that you can access them with the number keys. For a full list, hit F1 when you go into the game.

Fun with spells

Although it is most important to get to grips with spells if you are a mage, all three character classes need to get to grips with magic use. At low levels you need to develop one offensive spell to a high level – the best ones for this are either the firewall, fireball, or lightning. The firewall is the most efficient spell you can have and is certainly the one to go for if you are a warrior. A few well-placed firewalls can obliterate a whole room of monsties if you place them well enough.

As a mage you're going to need to start spreading your skills by about level six or seven – if you haven't learned lightning by this point, you're in deep shit. Beyond level seven or eight you're going to find that the fireballs are less effective against some of the tougher monsties.

As you progress you'll find that both the guardian and stone curse spells are pretty important (although they use a lot of mana), and for mages at the higher echelons (level 20+), you'll find that the teleport spell is a godsend. If you use this one right, you should never lose a fight.

The real 'pièce de résistance' spell-wise, though, is the elemental spell. All mages from about level 15 onwards are going to need to make use of this, so try and get your hands on a staff! With this beauty up your sleeve you can open a door, lob in a deluge of elementals, and anything that was in the room will be toast before they get anywhere near you.



stairs. Run *around* the stairwell (don't go down) and old thickie-fatso will try and move onto the steps. As he is an NPC, he will get stuck on the steps and you can pelt him with stuff. Don't forget to nick his cleaver when he's dead, as it is one of the most powerful weapons in the game.

Or go to the Butcher's room, open the door, cast the firewall spell inside and shut the door again. Sit back while he roasts like a pig. BWUHAHAHAHA.

Characters



Mage: Obviously mages are the best magic users, but unfortunately they're a bit on the weedy side. Each time you go up a character level it's worth pumping virtually everything into magic rather than fanning about with strength. No

one wants a tough wizard who can't cast spells for toffee.

You should always make sure that you're using the right spell for the monstie you're attacking. Certain creatures are either resistant to fire or lightning – it's a good idea to keep spells of both types on the function keys, so you can easily swap between them.

Make sure you have a sword and shield in your inventory at all times... the mage may completely *suck* when it comes to hand-to-hand combat, but there are some characters in the deeper levels who are immune to magic.

QUICKIE HOTKEYS: Fire spell, lightning spell, heal, teleport and either stone curse or golem.



Warrior: The big tough guy and definitely the character to go for if it's your first time. Pile loads of experience points into strength and dexterity at the beginning, and then as time progresses, treat yourself to a bit of magic.

Later on in the game you're going to need to use a few spells and the firewall is without a doubt the best bet for a warrior.

Get yourself a box (yes, I know they initially seem a bit crap), because later on you're going to need a ranged weapon that can be used quicker than a weedy little warrior spell.

Never get surrounded... use the tips outlined elsewhere with doorways, and try to keep your back against the wall in a fight. Pick off the bad guys one by one and alternate blows between two chosen enemies.

QUICKIE HOTKEYS: Health, mana, firewall spell.



Rogue: The best character for long-distance damage. You don't need to get a unique bow – just make sure you get one with some serious damage points.

As far as tactics go, before entering a room

fire a couple of arrows through the open door to activate a few of the monsties inside – this will give you an idea of what's going on in there. If a whole horde of bad guys come tearing towards you, you need to make sure you have some choice spell at your disposal to keep things under control. The stone curse spell is more useful for the rogue than any other character class. The golem spell is also extremely handy for wiping out big gangs.

Note: the 'standing still' attack, using the shift key outlined elsewhere, makes the rogue less accurate.

Pick off bad guys one at a time with arrows. Don't waste time with swords and axes – the rogue is most effective with a bow. Don't worry about defence, you shouldn't get close enough to the monsties to make this a problem. Also, ensure that you make use of the rogue's trap-checking abilities.

MULTI-PLAYER TIP: A rogue always works much better with a warrior than with a mage.

The shrines and what they do

There are shrines dotted around all over the place, and like everything else in the game they are randomly located. The following list was lifted from www.diablo.scorched.com (a truly excellent *Diablo* site with loads of tips and snippets of information – certainly worth plundering), and as far as we can tell, it's pretty accurate.



ABANDONED SHRINE

"The hands of men are guided by fate"
Raises dexterity by two

CREEPY SHRINE

"Strength is bolstered by heavenly faith"
Raises strength by two

DIVINE SHRINE

"Drink and be refreshed"
Health and mana refilled – two random potions given

EERIE SHRINE

"Knowledge and wisdom come at cost of self"
Total mana increased – life is lowered

ELDRITCH SHRINE

"Crimson and azure become as the sun"
All potions turn into rejuvenation potions

ENCHANTED SHRINE

"Magic is not what it seems to be"
One spell drops a level and all the others go up a level

FASCINATING SHRINE

"Intensity comes at the cost of wisdom"
Total mana drops, a firebolt spell is added or increased by two levels

GLIMMERING SHRINE

"Mysteries are revealed in the light of wisdom"
Identifies all items in your inventory

HIDDEN SHRINE

"New strength flows from destruction"
One item loses ten durability, all others gain ten points

HOLY SHRINE

"Wherever you go, there you are"
Phases you

MAGICAL SHRINE

"While the spirit is vigilant, the body thrives"
Mana shield (the blob above your head)

MYSTERIOUS SHRINE

"Some grow weaker as one grows strong"
Two stats lose a point and one of them gains two

ORNATE SHRINE

"Salvation comes at the cost of wisdom"
Total mana lowered, one spell is pumped up two levels

QUIET SHRINE

"The essence of life flows from within"
Vitality increased by two

RELIGIOUS SHRINE

"Only time can diminish the power of steel"
All items fixed... cool

SACRED SHRINE

"Energy comes at the cost of wisdom"
Total mana depleted, charge bolt improved

SECLUDED SHRINE

"The way is made clear when viewed from above"
Full autopap

SPIRITUAL SHRINE

"Riches abound when least expected"
Fills all free inventory holes with gold

SPOOKY SHRINE

"When avarice fails, patience grows"
All players receive full health points

STONE SHRINE

"The power of mana refocused renews"
All staves recharged

THAURMATURGIC SHRINE

"Everything that once was open is now closed"
Guess what? Closes all chests, but refills them

WEIRD SHRINE

"The sword of justice is sharp and swift"
All blades (swords, axes, etc) are given an extra damage point

Also...

BLOOD FOUNTAIN

Adds health when clicked on repeatedly

PURIFYING SPRING

Adds mana when clicked on repeatedly


FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

One stat loses a point, another gains one

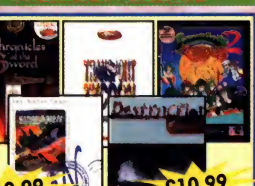
GOAT SHRINES AND CAULDRONS

These randomly duplicate other shrines

Battle.net

In order to use *Battle.net*, your PC must have the TCP/IP protocol installed as well as TCP/IP support for 32-bit applications. If you connect to the Internet using Windows Dial-Up Networking and browse with Netscape Navigator version 2.0 or higher, or Internet Explorer version 3.0 or higher, then you almost certainly have the necessities already. If you connect using a proprietary dialer such as Dial.Pipex with a 16-bit browser (such as Netscape version 1.x), you probably don't have the right configuration. If this is the case, you'll need to contact your service provider for updated software. 

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
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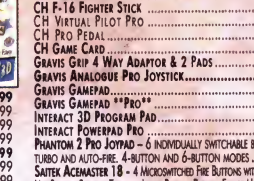
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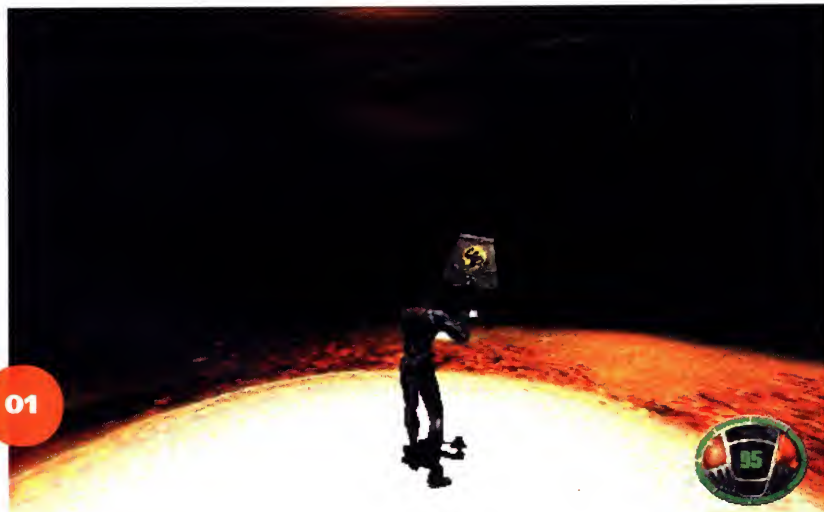
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TROUBLESHOOTER!



MDK - Walkthrough: Part One

Mission: Deliver Kindness? Murder Death Kill? Malevolent Defecation King? Whatever you call it, **Charlie Brooker** can tell you how to complete it. Here's the first part of our step-by-step walkthrough guide to Shiny's shiny shenanigans...



Level 1

01 Arena 1

The second Kurt's dinky little feet hit the floor, turn round and collect 'the world's most cowardly power-up' – your well-being will be somewhat increased. Then run up the corridor and chain-gun the waving guard to death. Soon two more will appear – fill the mothers full of lead. That done, you can pick up the 'world's smallest nuclear bomb' from the left-hand side of the enclosed area and detonate it next to the locked door, which leads you through to...

02 Arena 2

You're in the practice room. If you can't work out what to do here, despite the on-screen prompts, then you're a bit simple. Just enter sniper mode, blow the heads off those target-wagging guards, then wait for the bomb crate to float down to the centre of the tower. Shooting this will destroy the tower and its inhabitants, after which you should exit sniper mode, grab the grenade which drops down, then throw it at the transparent red wall. Don't stand too close or you'll hurt yourself, knucklehead.

Here's the (slightly) tricky bit – you'll have to practise using your parachute in order to reach the mortar

power-up which is squatting atop a pedestal like some kind of weird, rotating, tubular vulture. Once you've done that, enter sniper mode once more and lob a mortar through the hole in the front of the building before you. This will shatter the glass and allow you to enter.

As soon as you're inside, concentrate your fire on the guard generator in the middle of the floor. Once that's been taken care of, re-enter sniper mode and kill the guards by shooting them *in the head* (not in the targets

they're holding). Grab the decoy power-up, then hop up the platforms and you're into...

03 Arena

Enter sniper mode immediately, and target the area just above the closed door. Ooh, look at the pretty exploding crates... shoot any of them, blow the shit out of everything and open the doors. Leg it inside (avoiding the guards and the tank), and keep shooting the guard generator until – boom! A way out of here...

04 Arena 4

Hooray. It's the subway. As ever, concentrate on taking out the guard generator as soon as possible (it's on the left), then jump across the track and take out the one hidden in the alcove on the right. Fetch the grenades and then come back down to the train. Cross over to the other side through

02



04



03



◀ the train and approach the large door. When the tank comes at you like a big angry penis, smite it with your grenades. Run ahead et voilà – le exit, monsieur. C'est magnifique, non?

05 Arena 5

Pay attention to this bit, because it's really hard unless you do what we say. Having brutally murdered the first person you see, shoot at the console. This calls a spaceship, which should arrive within seconds. Walk inside the ship and you're into the nifty bombing mode, where you'll be shown a view looking down at the arena with a targeting cross-hair. The ship will automatically fly you over the arena before dropping you back off at the starting point, so make the most of your airborne time by bombing the heck out of absolutely everything (you have infinite bombs).

Once back on terra firma, run towards the building in the middle (the ones on either side contain power-ups, mind, so it's worth paying them a quick visit). When you get close to the last building, a tank will show up. A second ship will then appear above the building and hover for a few seconds. Enter sniper mode and shoot the exploding crate, which dangles beneath it like a tagnut. This blows up the building, enabling you to enter. Destroy the guard generator and a nuclear bomb will be revealed. Get this and the turkey power-up, then leave the building. The exit door is located in the far wall at the back of the arena – use your atom bomb to open it up.

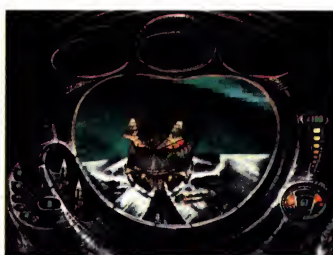
06 Arena 6

This bit's quite hard. Follow the passage to the right and kill the guards. Then stand behind the last block on the right to shield yourself from the cannon. Assuming you grabbed the decoy earlier on, throw it to the left, then chain-gun the cannon while it fires in the wrong direction. If you have any grenades left, use 'em jackass.

Now prance up onto the block and enter sniper mode. Choose the mortars from your inventory, and loose one off into each of the four 'funnels' (practice makes perfect). These lead down to the glass-fronted rooms and will blow up the four obnoxious, taunting guards. If you don't have any mortars, or you're so crap and rubbish that you use them all up, backtrack a bit and you should find some more have turned up.



08



09

06



05

07

After each guard has been destroyed, the entire structure blows up, leaving a hole in the floor. Obliterate the two tanks, then stand at the highest point on your side of the hole. From this position, jump and float (with your chute) to the lowest point on the other side. If the gods are smiling on you, Kurt will grab hold of the ledge and pull himself up. Follow this section of the canyon and collect a 'cowardly' power-up to restore your health level. Then return to the edge of the hole and float down again using your ribbon chute.

07 Arena 7

Jump off the glass platform at the start of this arena and glide down, avoiding the spikes as you do so. Destroy the target dome in the centre of the room with your grenades, and an air vent will be revealed – just hop onto it to be carried up into the air. When you reach the top, turn around to face the long glass platform sticking out of the wall. Land on this, then jump from platform to platform to reach the top of the room (this is fist-clenchingly hard, but persevere, okay?). Once you're at the top, collect the power-ups and vamoose.

08 Arena 8

Follow the passageway round to the left and shoot the alert droid till it opens. Walk in to the droid, then drive it back down the passage and around to the door which leads into the corridor filled with sentries. Now, while inside the alert droid, you can drive between them with no trouble. Once you get to the end of the corridor, avoid the very big guard and jump past him to the room beyond. Collect the 'world's most interesting bomb' and throw it into the centre of the room. When all of the enemies have crowded round it, press Enter on your keyboard to detonate it, remembering to stand well back!

If any of the sentries survive, take them out with your chain-gun 'til they have all been destroyed. Leave the corridor and collect the nuke pick-up which drops down to the left of the entrance door, and use it to blow the atomic lock off the exit door.

09 Arena 9

After floating up the air shaft, stand on the highest section of the arena and face the distant tower above the glass walls. Zoom into the boss (he's in the tower) and select sniper grenades. Target his face. Shoot him and, if successful, you will kill him with one shot. If you miss, or if you don't have any sniper grenades, just try again. If you do hit him, keep shooting at him with normal bullets, and a supply of sniper grenades will eventually drop down into the arena. Once he's bought the farm, the landscape will disintegrate, heralding the end of this level.

Congratulobdylations.



Level 2

10 Arena 1

Wait around a second and a sniper grenade will float down behind you. Grab it and make your way down the ramp to the next room. As soon as you spot the floating guard, use sniper mode (and your new grenades) to rub him out. Then get the alert droid. At this point the ceiling should shatter and a nuclear bomb will arrive. Lovely. Pick it up and hurl it at the door.

11 Arena 2

Ahh, the shooting gallery. Immediately turn to the right to face the gunfire, then side-step into the arena. Dodge the blasts and work your way across to the other side of the range. Simple.

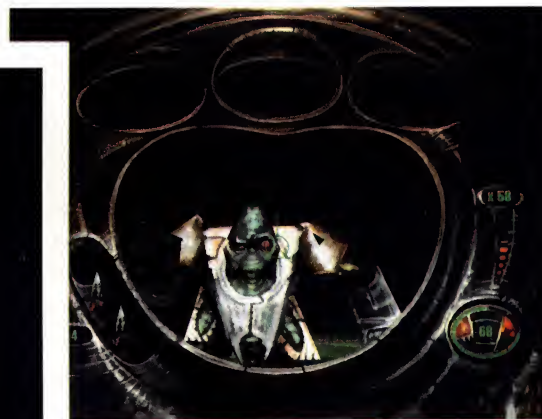
12 Arena 3

Peg it up the ramp and wait for the mortar to float down. Take this, then turn to face the glass wall. Using sniper mode, fire a mortar through the rectangular hole with the striped sides.

The mortar will drop down to the guards and cause the floor to shatter as it detonates. A nuclear bomb will then fly out of the hole and float down in front of the ramp. Lob it at the door and skidaddle, daddy-o.

13 Arena 4

Ooh. An arms factory. Walk to the edge of the glass platform and fire a mortar at the ringleader (using sniper mode, dum-dum). Then take out the two grunts carrying giant missiles. A big explosion should ensue. Make like a porn star and dive right into the hole.



14 Arena 5

Without moving, chain-gun the first guard, then enter sniper mode and zoom in on the second one (he's hiding behind one of the far cannons). Pop the sucker in the god-damned face, then walk down to the middle cannon. Get the turkey power-up, and turn to face the shooting range. Fire repeatedly with your chain-gun, and the cannon will recoil, smashing through the window in the process...

15 Arena 6

Simply leap across the platforms to reach the exit door at the rear of the arena. Avoiding the cannons is easy if you memorise their firing sequence.

If you fall off, there are two air-vents that can be used to reach the platforms again. One's at the start of the arena, the other is in the middle.

16 Arena 7

Drift down to the first of the floating platforms, where the leaping guard

is waiting. As you approach, fire and he'll prance away.

Stay on this platform, as you'll be able to attack the leaping guard without being hit by the pendulum from here. Plenty of sniper mode headshots will finish him off, at which point a ramp will appear, leading to the exit. Jump across to this using the platforms, being careful to dodge the pendulum.





18

17 Arena 8

Kill as many people as you can and grab as many power-ups as possible. After a certain number of kills (which is randomised each time), a nuclear bomb will head for the back of the arena, behind the gigantic white tower. Kill the sentry and the two alert droids, then throw the nuke at the door. You hateful twat, you.

18 Arena 9

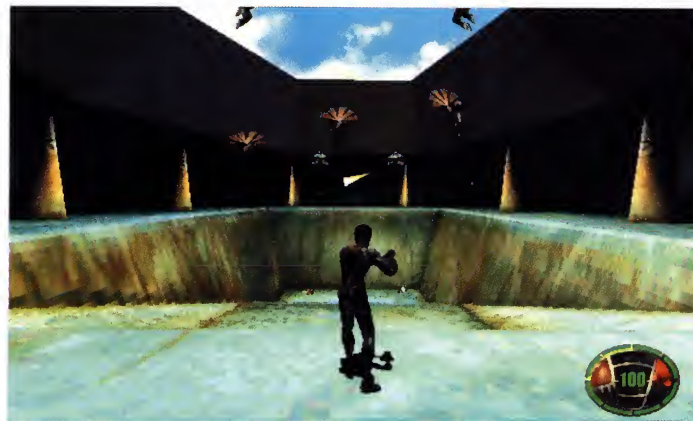
Walk round to the landing bay and wait for a sky sled to land. As the two guards jump off, jump onto the sled and turn to shoot them. The sled should now take off and fly around some battle arenas, where the guards are practising their skills, before moving into the mine controller's tower. Once the sled has stopped, it will drop you to the floor and allow you to enter the last arena.

For a bonus health power-up, wait at the landing bay and run into the left-hand rear corner when it is empty. If you do this correctly, you'll be teleported to one of the battle arenas. Wait for a moment, and one of the sky sleds will drop off a health power-up. Collect this, then stroll into the centre. This will teleport you back to the landing bay.

19 Arena 10

Follow the passageway up into the arena, then climb the ramp to your right to reach the upper platform and a health power-up. Face the window on the other side of the room and enter sniper mode. Shoot once to break the glass, then zoom in and shoot repeatedly at the boss until he closes the window. For a bonus shot, try to target his nose and eyes – ha ha ha ha ha.

Once the window has closed, exit sniper mode and wait for the boss to reappear in his glass ship. Shoot the ship repeatedly as it flies around the arena. Eventually, it will explode and the boss will drop to the floor and start running around like a swine, releasing guards into the area as he does so. Chain-gun him to death and you've completed this level. But before you get all smug and self-congratulatory, bear in mind that you only got this far because you read this little cheater's guide. So you're a sad-arse really.



21



19

22



20

Level 3

20 Arena 1

Straight away, enter sniper mode and zoom in on the two sentry guns. Kill 'em both, then exit sniper mode and use the chain-gun to kill the flying guard.

Some more guards will appear. Chain-gun them to death, then position yourself in the centre of the arena and use sniper mode to zoom in on the two locks either side of the large door in the distance. Shoot both of these off and the door will crash down, killing the sentry. Stay in sniper mode and wipe out the two bomb-tossing swines as they run out.

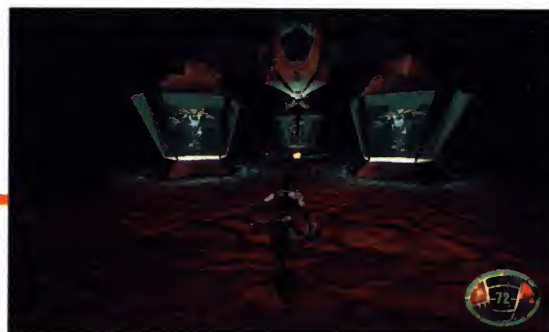
Next, find the ramp on the right-hand side of the room and jump across to the upper platform. Kill the guard standing there, then climb onto the slanted platform on your left. From here, jump over to the platform with the chain-gun power-up. Grab that, then float across to the bones' air-strike power-up. Drop back down to the floor and exit the level (through the door, turkeyneck).

21 Arena 2

Kill both of the sentries, then use your chain-gun to destroy the guards to the left and right of the entrance. Run to the two alcoves behind the guards and collect the two pick-ups – homing sniper bullets and a decoy. Hop into the empty pool and collect the super chain-gun. Jump out again and kill all the new arrivals. Walk behind the diving board to find the pool annex. Kill all of the guards in here and collect the apple. Wait for the two flying drones and the sled-riding guard to break into the room through the window, then kill the two drones. Chuck the decoy back towards the pool area to distract the guard on the sled, then enter sniper mode and blow his goddam head off. Exit sniper mode and jump on the sled to collect the 'world's most interesting bomb' from the top of the room. Then leap down the shaft.

22 Arena 3

Get both the sentries, then enter the glass tunnel. Kill the guard in the tunnel and the glass will break, enabling you to float down into the room. Run to the room at the rear of the arena, grab the twister power-up, then chain-gun the glass containers. Once they've all shattered, run back out and hop on the platform in the centre of the arena, which will whisk you away...





23 Arena 4

Collect all of the pick-ups in this deceptively cheerful room, then shoot repeatedly at the walls until they fall away. Use your grenades to blow up the seven guard generators in this room, then take out the guards themselves with your chain-gun. Use your twister power-up if necessary. Finally, kill the sentry at the exit to unlock the door which leads to the next bit...

24 Arena 5

The 'Cow' room. Walk to the edge of the platform which looks down into this arena, then use sniper mode to shoot the two sentry guns in each corner of the room.

Next prance onto the blue platform to your right, and enter sniper mode again. Target the blue exit in the top right of the area and wait for the floating sentry to rear his ugly head. Using sniper grenades (if you have any), teach him a thing or two about pain.

Leap onto the floor and collect the health power-up. Then leap into the blue cave on the left-hand side, pick off the baddies from within. Once they're deadified, jump up to the red cave on the left and follow the red passageway up to the green platform. Destroy the generator and the alert droid, then stand at the base of the arrow which points out into the arena. Follow the arrow by jumping across to the yellow platform in the middle room. Kill the two guards, and use the platform to jump across to the exit.

25 Arena 6

Stand at the top of the slope that leads down into this arena and murder the guards at the bottom. Next, target the rotating gun pod and zoom in closer. Fire one shot to put the wind up it, then quickly shoot through its open front section to get the operator in the face.

Leg it down the slope and kill everybody like the murderous wretch you are. When you reach the end of the trench, jump into the air current to be lifted to the upper levels of the arena. Once at the top, run forwards and kill all the guards at the top of the air-shaft.

Stand at the rear of the arena, so that you are facing the sentry and the two guards at the other end. Enter sniper mode and zoom in on the sentry. If you have a sniper grenade, use this to perform a one-hit kill. If not, simply use normal sniper bullets. Always remember you can side-step while still in sniper mode. Next, kill the two guards, then move up the trench's edge and collect the apple. As you move to collect it, four drones will fly down the length of the trench, followed by two guards on sleds. As they reach the end of the trench, they will pause and turn around to fly back up. Zoom in on them when stationary and pop one in the face. This should leave a sled floating in the air. Run back down to it and jump on board. This will then fly you over to collect the thumper and the health power-up. When the sled stops zooming around, jump off and exit.



24



27

28



26

26 Arena 7

After floating up the air-shaft, stand in front of the glass window and select the thumper from your inventory. Shoot the glass, then throw the thumper down into the arena. This will take care of most of the guards in the arena. Jump down and finish off the rest.

Once all of the enemies in this arena have been destroyed, jump up onto the block in the middle of the floor. Once on top, turn around 'til you can see a dark hole in the wall, above another block. Jump across to this block, then enter the hole (tee hee, snigger).

Inside you will find a three-pointed object at the bottom of a slope and a health power-up. Eat the power-up, then shoot repeatedly at the object to make it spin. Leave the room and the large door in the arena will now have opened. Walk through this door and collect the sweets.

At the end of the corridor you will find a large room with a strange alien structure guarded by two guards. Kill both of them, then shoot at the front left-hand side of the structure. Once this has collapsed, destroy the opposite side in the same way. When both sections have been destroyed, shoot the exposed inner structure to uncover the exit.

27 Arena 8

Follow the passageway to the right until you reach the arena entrance, guarded by an alert droid. The right-hand passageway is a dead-end – but hey! – it *does* contain a health power-up.

Kill the droid, then wait for the sled-surfing guard to enter. Kill him and nick his sled. As the sled flies you around, turn on the spot and chain-gun all attackers. The sled will eventually bash through the far wall of the arena, taking you on to...

28 Arena 9

This is tricky. Munch the turkey power-up hidden on the right-hand side of the room, then stand in front of the big metal wheel. A wave of violent alien dogs will appear from beneath the wheel, which will spin as the end-of-level boss appears. Chain-gun the dogs, then wait for the wheel to come to rest. When it does, quickly enter sniper mode and pick off one of the four red domes on the wheel's rim. The remaining domes will shoot at you, then disappear as the wheel starts to spin again. Repeat this process

until all the domes have been destroyed, at which point the boss will fall out of his room and die like the undeserving bastard he is. Ptu! I spit at him! May he writhe in agony in godless oblivion ever more.

Next month

Gasp in awe as our Charlie leads you gently by the hand through the final three levels of MDK. Try not to strain anything with anticipation.

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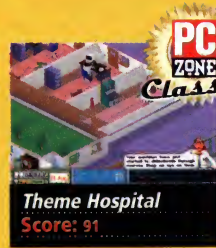
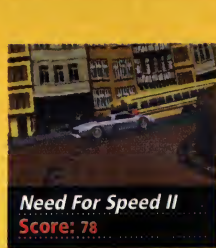
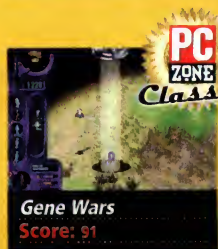
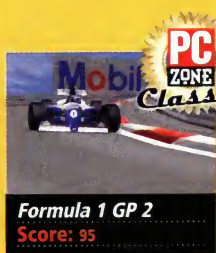
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PC ZONE

Welcome to the *PC Zone* Recommended section. Here you'll find the cream of the games we've painstakingly reviewed and picked out over the years, plus those we feel should go down in PC gaming history as all-time Classics.



IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP IT simple, we've split it up into genres: Action games, Sports simulations, Adventure games, Flight simulations, Driving games, Role-Playing Games and Strategy games.

The top ten games of each genre are then listed, with a brief summary of the game, review score, publisher and contact number. Most of the games listed here were awarded *PC Zone* Classic status (90 per cent and above), and some managed a *PC Zone* Recommended award (80 per cent and above) at the time that they were reviewed. To achieve the highest accolade, a game must not only be very playable, entertaining and offer long-term appeal,

but it must also be original and/or offer something new and worthwhile to the genre. To this end, we've included some sequels, which although scored lower than the original title, are deemed better games (they didn't get a higher score 'cos it had already been done and therefore they weren't exactly bursting with originality – okay?), so this guide isn't a list of the highest scoring games ever reviewed by *PC Zone*, but a guide to the best games now available.

When you're reading the reviews in the rest of the magazine, please remember to bear this section in mind. The highest scoring game is supposed to represent a benchmark in a particular genre, and we will always be comparing new games with this, in accordance with the above criteria. If you use this section along with the 'In Perspective' guide that now accompanies every review you should be able to gauge pretty accurately whether a game is worth buying, whatever your personal preference and taste. As a result, you will see games dropping out of this section as new and better titles are released, so keep your eyes peeled for new entries in each of the genres.

Jeremy Wells, Editor

Recommended

Action



QUAKE (96)

The seminal 3D shoot 'em up and quite possibly the most important PC game ever released. Very atmospheric when played as a one-player game and untouchable when played over a network. Despite the fact that it's now pretty aged, it's still *the* office favourite. Definitely 'pour hommes'!

Publisher:

GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



TOMB RAIDER (94)

The first game to take the *Alone In The Dark* principles and apply them in a new, in-er-face way. The play area is vast, the puzzles are clever and it's eminently playable thanks to an incredibly agile control system. If you have a 3Dfx card, you're in for a treat.

Publisher:

Core/EIDOS (0181 780 2222)



DARK FORCES (95)

Although not as technically impressive as *Quake*, *Dark Forces* is still held up as a better one-player game by some and yet slandered by others for not having a multi-player facility. That aside, it's a thrilling 3D mix of shooting action and exploration.

Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



DUKE NUKEM 3D (93)

The debate rages on, and there are still an awful lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.

Publisher:

EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



FADE TO BLACK (94)

The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical pre-cursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.

Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



DARKLIGHT CONFLICT (92)

It might not have a mega-budget cast or a film licence, but *Darklight* knocks spots off just about every other space combat sim there is. It looks utterly fantastic and the 3D engine is quite superb and very fast. No campaign mode, but plenty of action.

Publisher:

Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (94)

The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin to use live action in a positive way. Packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.

Publisher:

Origin/EA (01753 549442)



MAGIC CARPET 2 (92)

The original wooed us with its speed and smoothness – this is even better, with new night-time bits, monsters and a very useful on-line help system. Technically exquisite, the game engine's yet to be bettered.

Publisher:

Bullfrog/EA (01753 549442)



TIE FIGHTER (94)

Still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever released, it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast *TIE* on *X-Wing* fisticuffs.

Publisher:

LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES (90)

Of all the *HERC*-based games, this is the best. Successfully mixing real-time combat action with a thoroughly stomping engine, it's action-packed and fab over a network.

Publisher:

Activision (01895 456700)



Driving



CARMAGEDDON (95)

Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of different cars to choose from, plenty of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this one of the most entertaining driving games ever.

Publisher:
SCI (0171 585 3308)



NASCAR RACING 2 (92)

A worthy upgrade of the original game, featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, more controllable cars, improved opponent AI, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. With the constant stream of headset messages that add atmosphere this is a racing sim fan must.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)



NETWORK O RAC RALLY (94)

The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited *Sega Rally*. Go buy it!

Publisher:
Europress Software (01625 859444)



INDYCAR 2 (90)

The only real alternative to *F1GP2*, if you don't mind going round and round in circles, but still crave that unbelievable detail. Technically mind-blowing, though a little chuggy on anything but a high-end Pentium in SVGA mode.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)



SCREAMER 2 (93)

Whereas the first game cocked its hat at the classic *Ridge Racer*, this game is *Sega Rally* in just about every way but name – except that it's better in every way. Like *TNFS* it's very much an arcade, which makes it ideal for a quick fix.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)



POD (90)

One of the first racing games to support 3DFX, Direct3D and MMX. The graphics are awesome (understatement of the year) and with new cars, tracks and power-ups promised to be posted regularly on the Internet, you'll never get bored.

Publisher:
Ubi Soft (0181 944 9000)



MICRO MACHINES 2 (93)

The console classic is converted to the PC as new tracks provide a new challenge. The easy to use control system means it's user-friendly for the uninitiated. This version comes with a track designer.

Publisher:
Codemasters (01926 814132)



THE NEED FOR SPEED (89)

Exciting arcade racing action at its best with a good selection of cars and road tracks. Suicidal oncoming traffic and angry cops entrench *TNFS* firmly within the 'arcade' game sector.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 (92)

The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Ninja Pentium needed to run the hi-res mode – but it's still great.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 (86)

Another sequel, but this one's actually much better than the first game. The tracks are much improved, the cars handle much better and there's loads more options. Worth buying even if you own the original.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

Sports



LINKS LS (94)

The classic golf sim gets a much needed update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more gameplay options, gorgeous graphics and a redesigned menu and view selection system which make it better than ever. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

Publisher:
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



NHL HOCKEY 97 (90)

Visually slick and very playable, this 'all-new' updated *NHL* game features some new graphical tweaks and a smoother, faster engine. There's a handful of national sides thrown in as well as the most recently completed season's statistics and teams.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



PGA TOUR 96 (94)

There's little choice between *PGA Tour 96* and *PGA European Tour*, it just depends on which accents and jumpers you prefer. Both offer fantastic graphics, an easy to use control method and plenty of customisable play options. Golfing at its best.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



PRO PINBALL: THE WEB (90)

There are loads of PC pinball games, but *The Web* is the finest. You may only get to play on one table, but it's so detailed and full of features it doesn't matter. Accurate ball physics and distracting bonus games make it the ultimate in pinball action.

Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



ACTUA SOCCER (92)

Still the best soccer game on the PC, thanks to a super 3D polygonal engine and motion captured players. One-player games might be frustrating, but in two-player mode it excels, and Barry Davies provides some knockout commentary.

Publisher:
Gremlin Interactive (01142 753423)



MADDEN NFL 97 (87)

This PC incarnation is well up to the quality seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we now assume as standard for an EA Sports release. The best American footie game on the PC, but those graphics come at a price.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



NBA LIVE 97 (92)

Much better than the previous version, which lacked drive, this offering is well put together. With excellent graphics, sound effects and a hip soundtrack, thankfully it plays as good as it looks.

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



FIFA SOCCER 97 (84)

Despite the hype, it's not the best soccer sim on the market. If you're familiar with the control system, are wooed by glossy presentation and are a bit of a FIFA-head at heart, you'll like it. Otherwise...

Publisher:
EA Sports (01753 549442)



VIRTUAL POOL (91)

Simple but very playable pool sim with an ingenious mouse-drag control system and impressive engine. One-player games are fun, two-player games and network links are even better.

Publisher:
Interplay (01628 423666)



FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL (85)

An interesting game that nicks the best bits from other baseball games. Gameplay is a tad on the uninspired side as things plod along, but then this is a baseball game.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

Adventures



ALONE IN THE DARK 3 (95)

Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation, that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. Now available as part of a compilation budget pack.

Publisher:
Infogrames (0181 738 8199)



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (93)

Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

Publisher:
LucasArts/VIE (0171 368 2255)



BIOFORGE (95)

Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE (93)

Adeline's visually stunning isometric journey through the surreal land of Twinsun stole our hearts in 1995. The gloriously animated characters really bring the static backgrounds to life. *LBA* is pretty difficult, but time investment is worthwhile.

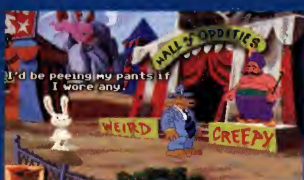
Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



SYSTEM SHOCK (95)

This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the game. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is invigorating.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



SAM & MAX (93)

Steve Purcell's hilarious dog/rabbit 'freelance police' duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a massive point-and-click fan.

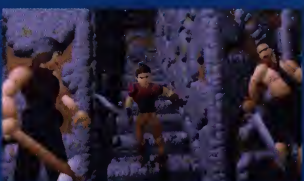
Publisher:
US Gold (0121 625 3388)



STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY (94)

A style oozier. At times it's as if you're inside a *Star Trek: TNG* episode. Non-linear and beautifully presented, it's a Trek-head must-buy. Yet to be bettered.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



ECSTATICA II (90)

We dubbed it "An adventure with balls". It's hard, but one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. It constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan busy for weeks.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



DISCWORD II (93)

Perfect Entertainment's immaculate follow-up to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the missing Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld 2* is a universally appealing adventure game.

Publisher:
Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Anyone with even a casual interest in adventures must have this game. The graphics look dated, but the one-liners are side-splitters. And it's on budget!

Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)

Role-Playing Games



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS (94)

This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET (78)

A great improvement overSSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs. The graphics are average but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy.

Publisher:
Mindscape (01444 246333)



ULTIMA VII (89)

Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction with the exploration of the detailed world of Britannia. This is the last of the *Ultima* series to give you complete party control. Soon to reappear as *Ultima On-Line*.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS (PRE-PC ZONE)

This one took RPGs away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any computer game in history. Buy it and believe it.

Publisher:
Origin/EA (01753 549442)



DIABLO (88)

Diablo is standard hack 'n' slash fare but the game's designers pull the whole thing off with such style that the overall game experience is addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a great coffee-table game.

Publisher:
Zabrac/Blizzard (01626 332233)



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II (PRE-PC ZONE)

It's one of those 'olde-worlde', first-person RPGs, but its progressive, party-based gameplay and subtle story elements set it worlds apart from all the other dross. The flick-screen graphics are a bit dated, but dungeon design is still worth a look.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)



TERRIS (88)

A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but so addictive we're still playing it. The quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.

Publisher:
AOL (0800 2797444)



LANDS OF LORE (PRE-PC ZONE)

Graphics and gameplay! Westwood Studios' graphical flair shines in this push-scrolling story about a witch. Adding non-player characters to your party keeps it interesting. CD version features Patrick Stewart.

Publisher:
VIE (0171 368 2255)



MERIDIAN 59 (86)

This ground-breaking on-line RPG, though cursed with garish and horrible graphics, allows thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Currently one of the best on-line multi-player RPGs around.

Publisher:
3DO Company (0181 296 1965)



BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR (PRE-PC ZONE)

First-person perspective RPG with a huge game world and fairly complex battle system. Failed to take the RPG crown from *Ultima* due to limited character interaction, but a worthy second-hand buy.

Publisher:
Sierra (0118 920 9100)

Strategy



SYNDICATE WARS (95)

One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a sequel it is too: intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.

Publisher:
EA/Bullfrog (01753 549442)



SETTLERS 2 (92)

Manage little people, build stuff for their little towns, then kick the shit out of the opposition. *Settlers 2* is a brilliant game, but make sure you've got plenty of time on your hands. It really is that addictive!

Publisher:
Blue Byte (01604 232200)



X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE (95)

A re-vamped engine and real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



SIMCITY 2000 (92)

A classic game that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.

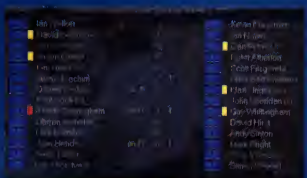
Publisher:
Maxis (0171 505 1500)



COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT (94)

...or C&C in SVGA with a few new units to be more exact. It's a testament to the original game's addictive gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be enormous fun to play. Still well worth buying.

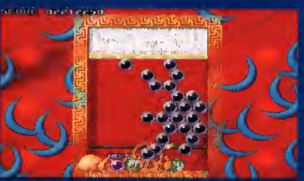
Publisher:
Virgin (0171 368 2255)



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 (90)

So you want to be a football manager, eh? Well so does our Jeremy, which is why he spends his life playing this, the most realistic, addictive football management game available, and not a spreadsheet as Chris keeps telling everyone. Heathen!

Publisher:
EIDOS (0181 780 2222)



PUZZLE BOBBLE (94)

We can't agree where *Puzzle Bobble* fits in *PC Zone Recommends*. Does it belong in here, with the *Civs* and *Sims* of the PC gaming world, or should it go in the action section? Who cares, as long as it's in...

Publisher:
GT Interactive (0171 258 3791)



CIVILIZATION 2 (90)

Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one but it merits a '90s update and place here.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



MASTER OF ORION 2 (92)

Very sophisticated space exploration/strategy game that rewards long-term play. You can play it for months and still find new things to research. If you're willing to put the time into it, *Orion 2* will stay on your hard drive for aeons.

Publisher:
MicroProse (01454 893893)



WARCRAFT 2 (82)

Warcraft 2 is C&C in Tolkienesque clothing, basically. It was a bigger hit with you lot than it was with us here at *Zone*, which is why it's gatecrashing our hot games section. Certainly a worthwhile purchase.

Publisher:
Zabrac (01626 332233)

Flight Simulations



EF2000 (97)

With fantastic graphics and a very realistic flight model, this is one of the best flight sims on the PC. Not even Microsoft's mighty *Flight Sim* can topple it from the top of the *PC Zone* prop-head ladder.

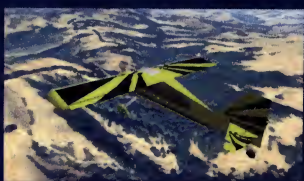
Publisher:
Ocean/DID (0161 832 6633)



US MARINE FIGHTERS (92)

Lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model. Originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters*, *Marine Fighters* now comes as part of *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so go get that instead!

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



FLIGHT UNLIMITED (96)

This was the first flight sim to sport truly amazing graphics and a frighteningly realistic flight model. You don't get to kill anyone (just like *Flight Sim 95*) but it still stands up well against today's competition, and you still need a beefy machine to fly it.

Publisher:
Looking Glass/Virgin (0171 368 2255)



FLYING CORPS (92)

Action-packed WWI flight sim with neat graphics. Nostalgic gamers will recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best WWI sim currently available for the PC.

Publisher:
Empire Interactive (0181 343 7337)



APACHE LONGBOW (96)

The *EF2000* of helicopter sims in as much as it marries fab graphics with a realistic flight model. The structure encourages you to adopt the same tactics as a real Apache pilot (or so we're told) and the missions are challenging and varied enough to keep you at it for weeks. It's big, too.

Publisher:
Digital Integration (01276 684959)



COMANCHE 3 (92)

This latest version of the *Comanche* flight sim is without a doubt the finest we've seen yet, sporting juicy terrain graphics due to a revamped VoxelSpace engine. Despite an accurate flight model, it delivers intense gameplay, and is extremely good fun.

Publisher:
NovaLogic (0171 405 1777)



FLIGHT SIM 95 (95)

The longest-running and most successful PC flight sim. An incredibly realistic flight model prompted the US Air Force to use this software as a training tool for their pilots. (But you don't get to shoot anything.)

Publisher:
Microsoft (0181 242 4194)



JETFIGHTER III (91)

The follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. You get to shoot things too, but there's no duty free option.

Publisher:
EIDOS Interactive (0181 780 2222)



SU27 FLANKER (95)

One for flight sim purists. Admittedly the graphics are crap, but our reviewer raved about it. A great flight model and superb mission builder make it an essential buy for prop-heads everywhere, just don't expect your best mate to be impressed.

Publisher:
Electronic Arts (01753 549442)



A-10 CUBA (90)

Functional graphics (cough) for a game that captures the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Slightly limited with the absence of a fully-fledged campaign but great fun nonetheless, and pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.

Publisher:
Activision (01895 456700)

NEW ISSUE

MAYIM

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

August 1997 £2.50

**SEX,
SAND,
SURF!**

**50 UK hotspots
every man
should know**

HOW TO...

Guarantee sex tonight
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Make easy money
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Run faster

PHEW!

Tyra Banks goes down slow...

**SPORT'S
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ONE-HIT
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PHOTO SPECIAL

**The weirdest
party tricks *ever***

**MEN GIVE
BIRTH!
(Honest!)**

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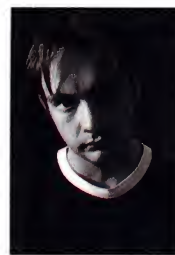
PLUS

Antarctica
caravans
brothel talk
sexy shades
beach stereotypes
Liv Tyler
...and a
very curvy
Carmen Electra

FREE WOMEN
With this issue!
See p100

On sale now

Hello. It's time for the Letters page once again, hosted by the lovely **David McCandless**, who's ready to listen attentively and reply politely to your correspondence.



WORD PROCESSOR

Write in!

Send your letters to:
**WordProcessor, PC Zone,
Dennis Publishing,
19 Bolsover Street,
London W1P 7HJ**

Send your e-mail to:
pczone@cix.co.uk

Don't forget to check out the **PC Zone Website** where you can chat to us about anything and get involved in the **Hot Topic of the month**.
www.pczone.co.uk

We at **PC Zone** reserve the right to completely edit and rewrite all correspondence in an effort to make ourselves look even more smug and witty.

MMX, MM SCHMEX

I don't know if I'm supposed to be asking you this, but what is MMX? I've got it and I want to know if it's any good, or if it's just an Intel scheme to fleece me of even more money...

Ben Cassidy, Dublin,

A llegedly, MMX stands for 'Marketing Mother XXXers' and is the alleged moniker for anything which is allegedly tacked onto an expensive product in order to allegedly increase its value, while allegedly having little or no alleged advantage for games players whatsoever. Allegedly.

CHILL DUDE

F or the first time ever I feel compelled to write about a review in your magazine, that of *Interstate '76*.

Your main criticism is that the graphics are awful because the detail is jerky and has to be lowered so much. What machine are you using for God's sake? I run a lowly P133 (entry-level is now 166MHz) and it runs as smooth as silk with full graphics on.

You also fail to make any mention of the best aspect of the game – playing it over the Net. Again, in this instance it is perfectly smooth.

As for rating *Carmageddon* higher – they're totally different kinds of games. *Interstate* easily outshines it. Play it on the Net for an hour or so on a reasonable machine, and I bet you'll write another review on it. Give it a chance.

Staverton, South Devon

J esus wept. Er, hello? Since when do people evaluate games solely on their graphical beauty? Huh? So the frame rate is smoother

on your machine. Big deal. Is the gameplay mysteriously improved on your machine too? How can you say *Interstate* is better than *Carmageddon*? You haven't played *Carmageddon*. We have. It's better. End of argument.

BOTTY LICKY

I 'm sure that in 100 years time the mag will be as cool as it is now.

Danny 'I worship PC ZONE' via e-mail

Y ou obsequious little twat. It's highly unlikely that PC Zone will exist in its present form in a century's time.

WEBSITE ROCKS

H ello! I like the new site and I'm glad you've decided to have one after all. It knocks

HOT Topic

Edited by **Charlie Brooker**

Each month we pick a topic so hot, it's in danger of igniting your head. Then we ask you to venture your opinions on it. This month's comments have all been taken from our fantabulous Web-based chat forum. Simply point your browsers at **www.pczone.co.uk**, and you can join in too...



O N THE MENU THIS TIME AROUND: *Carmageddon*. Should it be banned, or what? Eh?

'Shrike', a visitor to our Website, seems particularly well qualified to comment – he was on the production team, after all: "I would just like to point out that the 15 months I spent programming on *Carmageddon* haven't turned me into a total and utter psychopath," he insists, before ruining his argument somewhat by claiming that, "Just like most other poor sods, I love cleaning the dried blood from my motor's grille and fenders every Saturday morning." He goes on to add that the BBFC are "a complete bunch of *****", and apparently, we'll "find out why soon enough".

So, if the BBFC do get involved, would they be justified – and would cuts ruin the game? The charmingly nicknamed 'Pig Foetus' seems to think so: "If they turn the game into anything like the German option, I'll fit the wheel blades to my Sirocco and be round to visit BBFC HQ," he rants, although in reality he's

likely to be stopped by the police as he tries to negotiate the narrow Soho streets. Rather more sensibly, he goes on to suggest that "if they fuck it up too much, there must be some way to get *Carmageddon – The Director's Cut*. Downloadable add-on files perhaps?"

Yet another reader with a sophisticated on-line nickname, 'UglyWanker', weighs in with the following: "Unfortunately, it looks like a case of the old argument again: that games influence people's minds and that anyone who plays it will end up driving insanely and running down old grannies. It's all a load of toss. Do they think that after a game of *C&C* we all go out and start our own little army?" Fair comment. After all, everyone in the *Zone* office has played *Baku Baku Animal*, and we've certainly never felt compelled to start building columns of live animal heads. UglyWanker also declares that "anyone who thinks playing *Carmageddon* will turn you into a psychopath hasn't got their head screwed on straight."

The BBFC come in for more stick from

the spots off the crappy *PC Format* and *Gamer* sites from those guys in Bath at Future Publishing, although I hope you'll be updating your site more often than theirs. I think on average they update it every three months – if that!

Alex Ross via e-mail

You would think we wrote that ourselves, wouldn't you?

VIRTUAL COCK

Dear sir/madam
I am the owner of a VFX1 and this product is not 'dead', nor 'unsupported'.

"No longer supported" you reported. How about – gasp! – *Comanche 3*, which has excellent VFX1 support including stereoscopic vision. Or how about – another gasp! – *Jedi Knight* which will also support it. There are lots of games – including *Quake* – that support the VFX1, either with a patch from Forte or alternatively with native support.

The latest VFX1 drivers for Windows 95 take advantage of direct input, so the VFX1 can be configured for games instead of a joystick. Forte are now selling it to retailers in America for \$395, so we may see the same over here. Many software companies say that they would support it if they were asked by enough people, so if this letter is printed, VFX1 owners would be wise to contact them on the subject.

Check out the Forte homepage at Fortevr.com or the VFX1 users homepage at users.exis.net/~bunda, and you will see it is still very much an ongoing developing product.

Thanks.

Shane via e-mail

Hmmmm, cheers Shane. No doubt you're one of those sad, drooling loons who has built himself a little 'virtual cockpit' in his lounge. As the people in your house navigate around you and throw you sidelong glances, you sit there – with just a pair of shorts on – in front of a whole F-16 cockpit complete with flightstick and pedals, stuck on top of a wooden cabinet you built in your shed with Black & Decker work tools. Your VFX is on. Bubbles of puke pop out from under the helmet. Your eyes are red-raw. The capillaries are burst. But you still cling onto the sad fantasy that you are a fighter pilot. And that VR is the next big thing in gaming.

MUST BE A GAG

I was wondering whether you could help me. I am a member of a large on-line group which is called the Outer Rim Consortium. We have over 3500 members, and are currently the largest *Star Wars* club in the Internet world. We are mainly Americans, but this is where you come into it. We need to get the word out that we are the club to join if you want to play *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*. With 3500+ members, you will always be able to find someone to play against.

If you can help in any way it would be much appreciated. Visit the relevant site at <http://www.emperorshammer.org/orc.htm>.

Darkov
Regent Darkov of the
Guardians
FM/GN Darkov/White 1-3/Wing
II/CRS Warspite/IW/House
Scholae Palatinae/EH

This is a joke, right? I mean, you don't really call yourself the "Outer Rim Consortium". As in *chortle, sailors, oil rig workers, sea-scouts, quentos, firemen, badminton players...*? No? Ouch.

HERE WE GO AGAIN...

If you ever want to complain about language in *PC Zone*, follow this template, kindly supplied by Robin R Woods.

Dear Sir,

1) Start in a formal tone:

I am writing to you with regard to the May issue of your magazine *PC Zone*, which my ten-year-old [insert son/daughter/wife/scout group or some other vulnerable social group] purchased recently.

2) Cite example of outrage:

On page 86 there is a score panel for the review of a game called *Carmageddon* with the comment: "F***** smart".

3) Ask rhetorical question:

Do you really think that language such as this is necessary when passing comment on a computer game?

4) Say you are no prude:

I am no prude.

5) Say you are broad-minded:

I am as broad-minded as the next man.

6) Then contradict yourself:

But I really do think that to print language like this as a comment to someone's opinion of a game is not what one wants to see in a relatively expensive magazine.

7) Completely change tack and start railing against the evils of a corrupt society:

Why is it today that magazines,

television, films and a lot of the popular music has to resort to using language such as this?

8) Supply your own complex sociological theory:

Perhaps it's because these things lack the necessary content, and attention has to be grabbed by other means.

9) Blame *PC Zone* for your child's lack of manners:

When you are trying to bring up children in a right and proper manner, these sort of comments in national publications do not help.

10) End on a clever 'joke':

They are definitely not SMART.

OH CRUMBS

I love Pringles and will continue to do so forever.

Steve O'Neill via e-mail

Yeah, but their adverts with lots of WASPish Yanky teens forming an impromptu 'drum orchestra' out of empty cans and their masticating mouths make me hurl. Imagine how much better it would sound if the cool rhythmic beats were accentuated by the percussive qualities of an AK-47 Assault Rifle as a nearby psychotic sniper took potshots at their knees, mumbling, "Once you pop, you just can't stop" or whatever their banal slogan is.

QUENTARD

I received my complimentary game of *Theme Hospital* about two days ago. Since it arrived, you'd be hard-pressed to prise me away from my computer with a nuclear-powered crowbar.

Daniel Rushton via e-mail

Webdude 'Biohazard', who is sceptical that they need be involved at all: "So the BBFC have jurisdiction on this matter do they? Is it that film-like in its appearance?" he asks, before suggesting that they "give it an 18 certificate, but don't cut it."

The next missive comes from a mister 'Pentaduct', who first demonstrates some truly startling insight by admitting that he "can sort of see why the BBFC might censor it", then helpfully suggests that everyone should get together and form "a mob armed with baseball bats, meat cleavers and ice-picks" in order to "sort them out". Which would, of course, be very naughty indeed.

Suddenly, a voice in favour of censorship pipes up. 'Greyhawk' claims that: "This country has the highest car crime figures in the developed world. Any product that has a chance, however small, of increasing those figures will be subject to intense scrutiny. As a victim of car crime some five or six times over, I agree that parts of *Carmageddon* should be removed."

And why? Because "not everyone in this country is as level-headed as *Zone* readers obviously are, and it only takes one supreme dickhead high on *Es* to kill someone after playing this to prove that a certain amount of censorship is warranted." High on *Es*? Surely someone who's high on *E* is more likely to get out and start hugging pedestrians than running them over?

But there is a serious and personal side to Greyhawk's argument. He ends his message by stating: "I had a friend who was killed by a 16 year old joyrider who had drunk too much Hooch and nicked his dad's Volvo. The BBFC have a job to do, let them do it!"

Who's going to argue against that? Well, UglyWanker, for one. "Sorry to hear about your mate being mowed down by that nutter in his Volvo," he writes, "but that owes more to his alcohol intake than the influence of computer games, doesn't it?" He refuses to acknowledge a link between digitised fantasy and violent reality, arguing that: "The reason this country has such a high car crime level is

purely 'cos there's so many little fucking dickheads around." He then goes on to suggest that if the BBFC want to ban disturbing material, they could start by removing Peter Andre from the nation's screens, because "he's fucked my head up far more than any poxy computer game". Andre-censoring is an idea which yet another Web visitor, 'ShockWave', wholeheartedly endorses. "Now THERE'S a good idea for a *Carmageddon* patch," he writes. "Take out Peter bloody Andre! Just imagine hearing that stupid twat saying 'Flavaarrggggghhh!!!!' as you splatter him into a crash barrier."

'Rorsach' gives that idea the thumbs up, and proposes another 'celebrity patch': The Spice Girls. "I'm not that interested in *Carmageddon*," he announces, "but this could really spark my desire." At which point he bursts into song: "If you wanna be my lover... you gotta mow down my friends, whiplash lasts forever..."

Steering the debate back on course,

Y ou're OK with us Daniel. We won't resort to unnecessary force.

WE ARE SKILL

W ith reference to the article 'Are we being served?' by Patrick McCarthy in your February issue, Telstar has always understood the importance of understanding our customers and catering for their needs. I write because your feature was excellent, and its appraisal of our registration card was absolutely correct in every respect. It was because of your feature that we decided to review our card. I'm delighted to inform you that after two months we have received six times the number of cards than in the previous 18 months – an astonishing turnaround. So thanks *PC Zone*, and have you got any good ideas for an ad campaign?

Simon Jones, Product Manager, Telstar

W ho says our features are spurious? Who says you can't change the way people think? Who says you can't make a difference? Who says sequential orgasms are a myth?

QUENTALEDOS

I stepped closer still and saw the most horrific, useless, boring thing in my whole life. Many of your kind will agree with me – *Championship Manager II* is complete and utter crap.

William Alter, aged 12 via e-mail

Y ou, however, are quite mad, and obviously support Chelsea. **Z**

Letter of the Month

OFF YOUR CHEST

An occasional section where you – our lovely readers – vehemently complain about something and we, calmly and using the Sacred Powers Of Sarcasm, take you down a few pegs.

A few complaints here...

O n last month's cover CD you said *Blood* was made by 3D Realms. That's absolute bollocks – as you know, it's made by Monolith. Printing "3D Realms" shows a complete lack of competence on the part of your magazine's producers.

Gosh. A mistake. On the CD. Wow.

Your *On-line* section is pants. There's absolutely sod-all of any significant reference there. Try putting some links to interesting UK-based modem game-related sites, or more features about things like *Quake*, *Diablo* etc, because at the moment it's a load of crap.

Issue 50: Three-page feature on Diablo. Issue 48: three-page feature on QuakeWorld. Have you read the magazine recently?

About that twat you associate yourselves with called Macca (commonly referred to among the UK's on-line community as "that arrogant twat who works for *PC Zone*"). Why does Macca make himself out to be a *Quake* god? He's not good at *Quake* at all. He is LAUGHED AT by most influential UK clans, and most UK players. He's not good at *Quake* at all! Also, no-one's ever even SEEN him on the UK *QW* servers, which has led most people to believe that he's an arrogant bastard (probably true).

(You're contradicting yourself here, Jamie. You say nobody has ever SEEN Macca on the QW server, yet you KNOW that he's not very good at Quake. How so?)

So basically you should (a) sack Macca, and (b) sort out your magazine!



NB: Failure to print this letter will result in mutual co-operation among many UK people, resulting in this message being posted on EVERY UK newsgroup, EVERY UK *Quake* clan's Website, and other such stuff.

Regards

James McArthur
jamesmc@enterprise.net

J ames sounds pretty serious, doesn't he readers? We could've respected his opinions if he hadn't sent a crawly e-mail a day after his first one, taking back most of what he said. Here are some choice quotes:

"The references to you in the e-mail were not directed at you personally. I do not know you at all, so cannot make judgements about you personally, which is where I must apologise if it sounded as if I was doing so... I am quite a twat on-line at times, because I know that you can say a lot of things that can never really come back to haunt you ... I respect you as a gamer, because I am willing to bet you could wipe the floor with me at *Quake*. No hard feelings, mate?"

The joys of e-mail, eh?

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

GreyHawk returns with the following: "Look, you've got to expect this from a country that has the tightest censorship laws in the western world ('tis true, honest) – a certain amount of censorship is always needed," he insists. "A game like *Carmageddon* that goes out of its way to shock will receive lots of adverse publicity. You can't simply produce something like *Carmageddon* and expect it not to be censored in certain areas. Censors aren't out there to piss everyone off, they have to think of the national effect of this. It only takes one joyriding maniac, stoned out of his/her little mind to go 'hur hur! Look, *Carmageddon*!' and splatter a granny all over the pavement 'for a laugh' to prove that censorship IS needed – and believe me there are plenty of brainless, dickless joyriders with no life out there that can and will do this."

"Bullshit," replies 'Murrow'. "You're suggesting that the public is so narrow-minded and simple that they'll quite happily go out and do whatever they happen to see on a

computer screen. Surely even a complete brainless dickhead isn't THAT easily commanded? It's just a fucking game!"

GreyHawk disagrees. "The 'public' you refer to includes around three billion people around the world," he explains, "including serial killers, genocidal maniacs, perverts... you know, just Joe Public. I wasn't suggesting that EVERYONE will go out and do this, but people are strange. It only takes one psycho to believe in a game like this to kill someone. To say 'it's just a fucking game' is narrow-minded – you might say to the Nazis, 'it's just a fucking bloke' about Hitler but, well, that's history. Ask yourself what YOU believe, and then ask yourself WHY you believe it!"

Yes, there are plenty of strange people out there, agrees UglyWanker. "In fact, some people are just nuts. These people will still be nuts whether *Carmageddon* gets censored or not. If someone's that crazy then they could copy anything." He sums up his argument thus: "If someone's gonna mow down an old lady, he

doesn't need computer games as an excuse." Rorsach backs him up: "There will always be nutters out there that use games like *Carmageddon*, films like *Natural Born Killers* and bands like *Slayer* as an excuse for, or a focus for, their actions. Remove these focii and the psychopaths will merely find something else to latch on to." Bands like *Slayer*? You'd have to be something of a psychopath to even think about listening to that crap in the first place.

We don't have room to record the full ins and outs of the lively debate that followed, but you can check it out in the *Hot Topic* chat forum archives if you wish – just swerve your browser towards www.pczone.co.uk and you're away. For now, we'll leave the final word to 14 year old 'NicholasV' who points out that the BBFC's intervention probably won't make a blind bit of difference anyway: "If they censor it, there'll definitely be a patch that everyone will get off the Net. Those fools aren't gonna stop me getting my hands on a copy of the best game ever!" Quite. **Z**



For the fastest car news, open it up every week.

Open up the new look Auto Express magazine and you'll find far more than ever before. As always, being weekly gives us the edge when it comes to the biggest scoops and the latest pictures. The new format is equally up front in its opinions. It reviews the cars you want in a no-nonsense forthright style and conclusions are given in a new graphic grading system. Cutting edge features, consumer help pages with bite, top issues and a sportsweek section are all given a fresh clean style. Yet, unlike the rest of the automotive industry, all these extras won't cost you more. In fact, we're reducing our cover price to only £1.30. Auto Express readers certainly know how to drive a bargain.



The magazine where car news travels fast

Comment

John Davison wonders whether this could be the first year that game content wins over the technology.



STAND & DELIVER!



JUST AS THIS ISSUE OF *PC Zone* is going to press, the biggest industry games show – E3 – is about to start in what is left

of the Olympic village in Atlanta. Every last ligger, clinger-on, journalist and maybe even Macca if he's a very good boy, will descend on one of the hottest and most humid cities in America with the hope that there will be something new, fab and exciting to look at.

The show is one of those events industry types like to talk about at length, and mention a lot in magazine articles and on Websites. To you lot though, there's a very good chance that it means the square root of feck all. At the end of the day, for PC consumers it's nothing more than a watershed. For the first half of the year leading up to the event all of the games publishers will either a) deny all knowledge of any forthcoming product whatsoever, or more likely b) mention products, but mysteriously have very little to show on them (like *Daikatana*, *Hexen 2*, *Quake 2*, etc, etc). Once the show is over though, you'll suddenly find that all of the games you were excited about are every-bloody-where. The Websites will all go nuts (ours included), and the really meaty previews will appear in *PC Zone* because we'll have been able to get our grubby mitts

on loads of screenshots as well as some tangible hands-on information.

Everything will go quiet for a long time and we'll move into the 'slippage' phase. This is where we find that the carefully timed release schedule, that should see at least one 'really huge' title appearing every week between the end of September and Christmas, goes completely up the swanny – and everything hits just before Christmas, if we're lucky. This is then followed by a number of anomalous titles that will suffer from what is now deemed the 'Dungeon Keeper effect' – where a game's development slips temporarily into another dimension.



So what do we have to look forward to? Well, as I'm sure you can make out from the contents of this issue, 1997 is without a doubt the 'year of the sequel'. Just about every shit-hot release is either the true or spiritual successor to something else: *Tomb Raider 2*, *Quake 2*, *Duke Nukem Forever*, *StarCraft*, *Jedi Knight*, *Hexen 2*, *Populous 3*... the list goes on and on. Scarily enough they all look like being stunning too. Whereas in the past we've found that many of the blockbusters have been ultimately disappointing, we're now finding that game design is entering a new era.

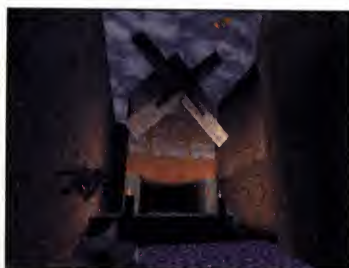
Previously one of the problems with the development process was that the gameplay design very often took a back seat while the technology angle was tackled. *Quake* suffered from this, as have numerous others over the years. This year though, thanks in part to the advances in 3D technology (both hardware and software), we're finding that existing technology is being re-engineered and licensed out to developers without the time and money to fund their own technology. Ironically, it's *Quake* that's at the centre of this new regime – the engine is so incredibly flexible and powerful that it can be adapted into virtually anything. Many of the 'biggies' this year are employing the latest id engine and all are supporting the new wave of 3D accelerator cards. What this

"In the past many of the blockbusters have been ultimately disappointing."

(Right) *Quess*. (Below) *Hexen 2*, *Tomb Raider 2*, *Quake 2* and *Quake Rally* – some of the biggies that we're already getting excited about.



theoretically means is that the developers can spend all the time they would dedicate to working on a game engine perfecting the gameplay itself. As a result, in a perfect world there is no reason why any of the games using the *Quake* engine shouldn't be significantly more playable than those in the past. That's the theory... and from what we've seen so far this could end up being the case. Hipnotic have already proved they can adapt *Quake* itself into an exceptional one-player game (with their two Mission Packs), and we've seen some amazing *Quake C* add-ons from the guys at Impact Developments in the shape of *Quess* and *QRally*. So who knows? This could be the first year that just about everything is absolutely bloody amazing. 7





He's afraid of... Chives

If you visit Duncan either take sandwiches or a triple pack of Imodium...

Mr Cursor



N OLD CHUM OF MINE (DAVE, WHO I haven't seen for ages due to the fact that he moved from Brixton to Dorset a year ago) phoned the other day and told me he was going to be in London for the weekend.

"Oh, right," I said, guessing what was coming next. He was about to suggest that maybe he could stay in my flat... but I wasn't particularly into the idea, as he's a bit annoying. (And anyway, it wasn't as if he couldn't stay with anybody else - he'd have at least three other options, and failing them, there was always his mum's place.) So I readied an excuse. Back to Dave...

"...So, er, I was wondering if it'd be okay to crash round your place for a couple of days?"

"Aaaaaaaah," I said, "yeah, fine, but your timing's a bit shit!"

"Oh?" He was deflated. "Er, why? What's happening?"

"I've got to go to Belgium," was my hasty excuse.

He bought it. Now he was flicking mentally through his list of alternative 'hotels', but continued the conversation so as not to appear too rude, as you do. "Erm... so why have you got to go to Belgium then?"

"I've got to go and see a game," I said.

It was perfectly feasible. After all, I do work for a computer games mag, and there's probably a software company in Belgium somewhere. QED. Time for some final niceties, and then the end of the phone call. Or maybe not...

"What's the game?"

Shit.

"Er, er, er, er, it's some, er, thingummyjig type doofer. Er, er, I can't remember what it's called. It's set in space though, on, er, the moons of, er... Jupiter. A gas that's lighter than hydrogen has been discovered or something.

Um. Er. But anyway, have you spoken to Troff? You could probably stay there."

"His flat's too small," said Dave.

"How many rooms do you need?" I joked.

"Two," said Dave. "I'm bringing Angela and Shannon."

An immediate turnaround...

Shannon! Shannon! Shannon! Shannon!

"So, er, Harry isn't coming then?" I wondered.

"Of course not. She split up with him two months ago. Didn't you know?"

No, I didn't. I'd only met Shannon the once, and very briefly too, but it was enough. Shannon! Shannon! I was picturing her face and going all sappy.

And seconds later, I was picturing all sorts of other things. Yes! I'd moved into 'pretend world', the lovely Shannon was there with me, and everything was absolutely brilliant. Then

Dave went and ruined it...

"Have you got Bogle's new number?" he asked.

"What? Oh. Er, no," I mumbled. "But, um, I reckon I can get out of that Belgium trip."

And I did.

"...We'll be there at about seven tomorrow evening, then," said Dave, closing my return call.

Mr Cursor becomes Mrs Mop

Cue some mind-bogglingly frenetic activity on my part the next day, as I attempt to make my flat 'presentable' to Shannon. I got up early and began with the lounge. It was like climbing a cliff, but I got my rhythm after a couple of hours. Certain items were beyond redemption, though, such as the nicotine-stained curtains. Hmmm. Brainwave! I removed them completely and hid them in the airing cupboard. As I was doing this I was imagining Shannon saying, "Wow! So you don't bother with curtains at all then?" to which my imaginary reply was: "No, you don't need that sort of shit when you live on the twelfth floor, you can have total privacy and a great view at the same time!" (Which is bollocks, incidentally, because the inhabitants of the many other tower blocks in my area all own and use telescopes for cheap 'peeping' thrills... as do I.) But anyway, I reckoned Shannon - being a bit 'new age' and all that - would go for this ideological no-curtains malarkey in a big way. Excellent. Thumbs aloft for body piercing, too!

But then I had to deal with the fridge and the cooker, and in fact the whole kitchen, which necessitated considerably more than a few purchases from the local Londis. Disinfectants, scrubbing brushes, that sort of thing. Tiring work. Phew. I hate this shit. Then bathroom and toilet time. Groan. Back to Londis. Then I went up the road and bought heaps of plants.

Good move. Good move.

Six o'clock now, and I was ready. But then a sudden thought: oh no, Dave would make a big deal of my computer to Shannon...

I could see Dave saying, "See that? That's the nerve centre. He plays computer games the whole time!"

"See that?" he'd say, thinking he was doing me a favour. "That's the nerve centre. He plays computer games the whole time!"

Shut up you arsehole! She's a girl! I'm trying to pretend I've got a life! Bastard! Bastard!

BZZZZZZ! Oh no! Reality! They'd arrived. Pressing the 'open ground floor door' button, I grabbed the last bin liner. Moving like a tornado I filled it with all visible computer game CDs and boxes (and my joystick), and then lobbed the whole kaboodle in the cupboard under the kitchen sink. My PC desk now looked like a workstation. Was I sure? Double check. Yes, I was sure. Triple check. Yes, all was good. I wiped the sweat from my brow, caught my breath and walked for the door, which was by now being knocked. I opened it and was confronted by... er, just Dave. Uhhh??

"Where's Shannon?" I yelled. "...Er, and Angela?"

"Oh, Angela went to her mum's," said Dave. "And Shannon ended up going to Bristol with her new boyfriend."

Revenge footnote

The following afternoon Dave asked if he could make a sandwich. I told him to help himself, that there were all sorts of fillings in the fridge. Having made and eaten his sandwich, I asked him what he'd put in it. "Philadelphia with chives," he said. What? I didn't think I owned a tub of Philadelphia with chives. Later on I checked. Ho ho ho. I was right. What Dave had actually eaten was half a tub of 'regular' Philadelphia which, having been in my fridge for so long, had loads of tiny chive-sized green things growing in it. Superb! Z



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